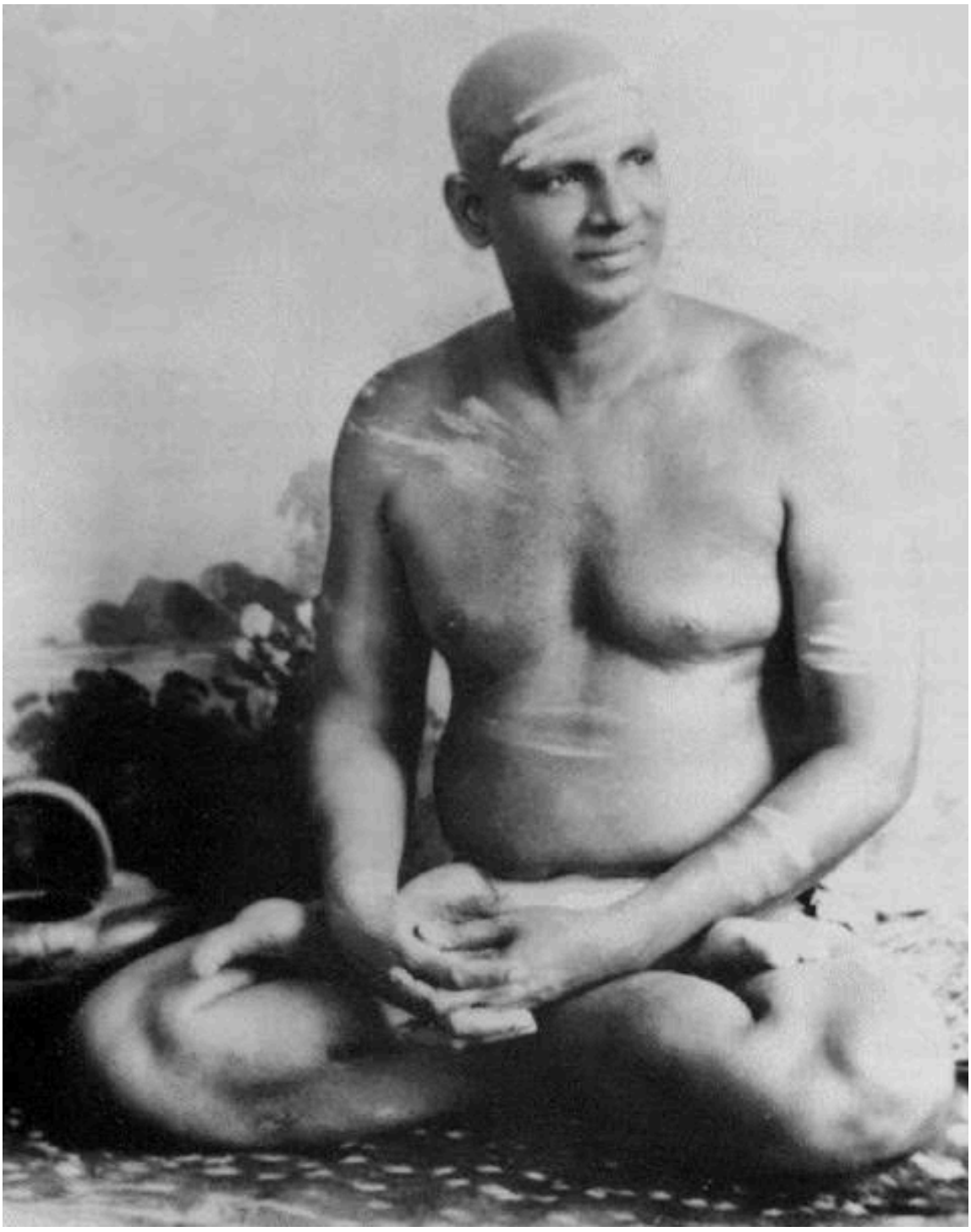

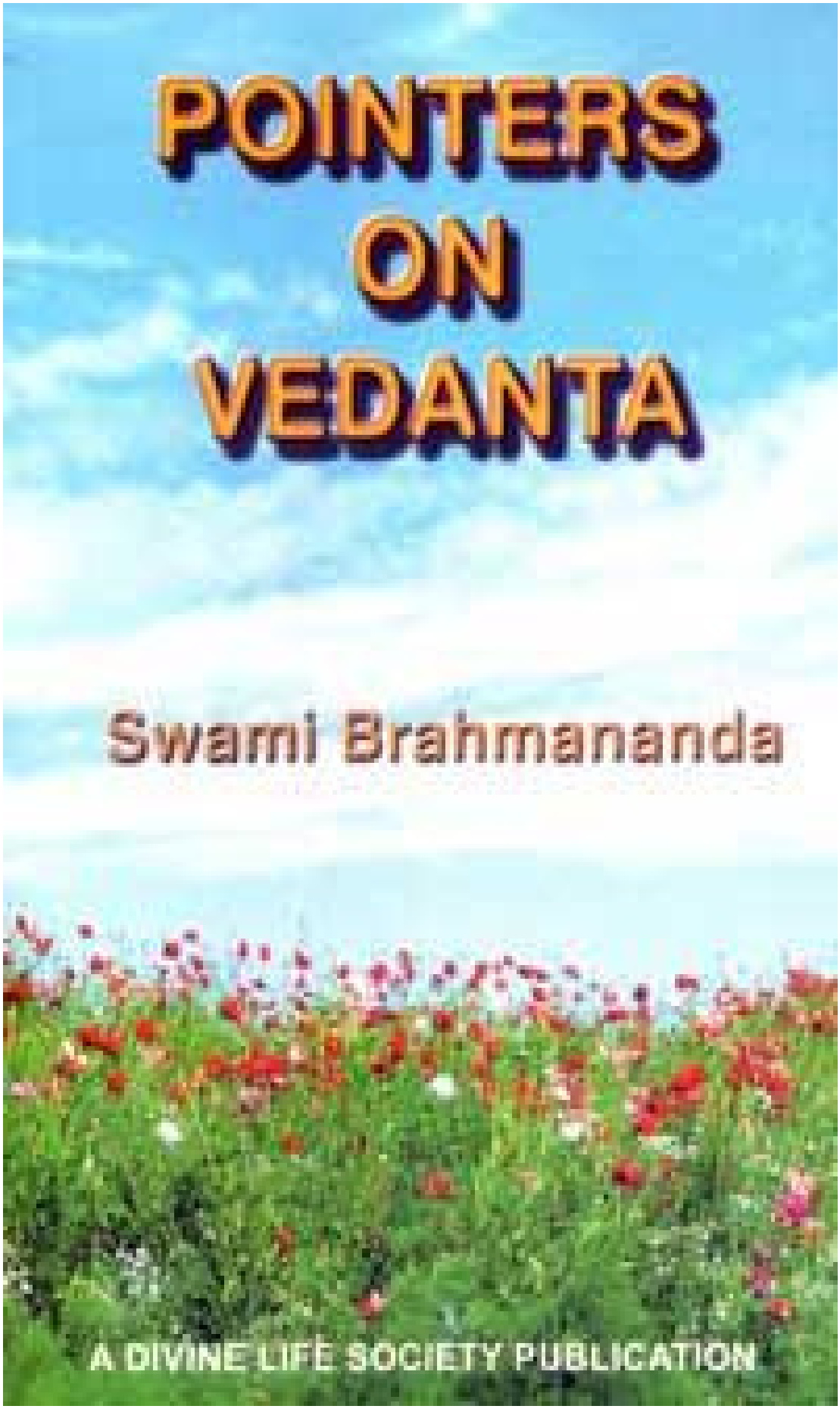
POINTERS
ON
VEDANTA
Swami Brahmananda
A DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY PUBLICATION

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Dedicated

To

Sadguru Swami Sivananda

Our Divine Master

Publishers' Note

We are happy to present to the spiritual seekers this book which is chiefly an anthology of selected writings of H.H. Sri Swami Brahmanandaji Maharaj, a senior Mahatma of Sivananda Ashram, who attained Mahasamadhi on 12th September, 2002. This valuable collection contains certain important works of Parama Poojya Swamiji Maharaj, which were published on earlier occasions in the form of small booklets for free distribution as Jnana Prasad. It is with this intention of preserving these valuable treatises that the present volume is being published.

Revered Swamiji's writings are endowed with the clarity of an acute scholar and the profundity of a practical saint combined in one. Students of Vedanta will find this collection as a vademecum for constant recollection of the Vedantic verities.

May the choicest blessings of the Lord and the Brahma-vidya Gurus be upon all.

Shivanandanagar,

Rishi Panchami,

1st September 2003.

–THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

Invocatory Prayer*

यस्मिन् ्यतो यरहि येन च यमय यमात् ्यमै यथा यदुतु यमव्परः परो वा,

भावः करोतत ववकारोतत पृथृक मवभावः संचोहदमतदखिल् ्भवतः मवरूप्।ि्

Yasminyatoyarhi yena ca yasyayasmaat yasmaiyatha

yadutayastvaparh paro vaa,

Bhaavah karoti vikaroti pruthak svabhaavah sanchoditastadakhilam bhavatah svaroopam.

O Lord!Anyone who in any condition, for any reason, at anytimedoes anything or changes anything, whether it is good or bad,with whatever intentions good or evil, in whatever manner,unto anyone, through anyone, in relationship with anyone,influenced by anyone–all that is your own Self!

–Srimad Bhagavata Mahapuranam (VII-9-20)

POINTERS ON VEDANTA

Prayers

SANTIMANTRA

(Taittiriya Upanishad II-I-I)

ॐ सि नववतु सि नौ भुनुक्तुसि वीय यकरवावैि।

तेजमवी नवधीतिमतु ि;ाववद्धवषावैि ।। ,

ओिशांततशा़ांततशांत़ात ।। !

OmSahaNavavatu Saha NauBhunaktu SahaViryam

Karavavahai. Tejasvi Navadhitamastu, Ma Vidvishavahai,

Om santi! santih! santih!

May He protect us both (the teacher and the taught) together (by revealing Knowledge). May He protect us both (by vouchsafing the result of Knowledge). May we attain vigour together? Let what we study be invigorating. May we not cavil at each other? Peace! Peace! Peace!

GURU STOTRAS

ॐ निो ब्रह्हिदभ्यो ब्रह्विवद्यासम्प्रदाय कतृभ्ययो

वंशऋवषभ्यो ि्द्भ्यो निो गुरुभ्यः ॥ १ ॥

सवोपप्लवरहितः रज्ञानघनः रयगथो ब्रह्मैिवास्मि ॥२॥

ॐ नारायणं पद्भिवं वससष्ठं शस्क्तंच त्पुत्रु- पराशरं च।

व्यासं शुकुं गौडपदं ि्न्तिं गोववन्दयोगीन्रिथामय सशष्यि् ्।

श्रीशङ्कराचायियथामय पद्पिादं च ि्मतिालकं च सशष्यि्।्

तं तोटकं वाततकयकारि् ◌्वाततकयकारि् ◌्सशवानन्दिन्यानमिगुरून्सन्तत-
ानितोऽस्मि ॥३॥

शुरुततमृितृतपुरुाणानिाालयं करुणालयि् ◌्।

निासि भगव्पादं शङ्करं लोकशङ्करि् ◌्॥४॥

शङ्करं शङ्कराचायं ◌ंकेशवं बादरायणि् ◌्।

सुत्रभाष्यकृतौ वन्दे भगवन्तौ पुनः पुनुः ॥५॥

ईश्वरो गुरुरि्तत ◌ूततभेयदववभागगने ।

व्यिोवद्व्याप्तदिाय दक्षिणिूतये निः ॥६॥

brahma-vid-vidya- Namasampradayakaribhyo vamsa-rshibhyo mahadbhyo namo gurubhyah.

2. Sarvopaplava- rahita prajnana-ghanah pratyag-artho brahmaiva'ham-asmi.

3. Om Narayanam padmabhavam vasishtham saktim cha tatputra-parasaram cha, vyasam sukam gaudapadam mahantam govinda-yogindram-atha'sya sishyam, sankaracharyam-atha'sya padmapadam cha hastamalakam cha sishyam, tam totakam vartikakaram sivanandam-anyan asmad-gurun santatam-anatosmi.

4. Sruti-smrti-purananam alayam karunalayam

Namami bhagavat-padam sankaram loka-sankaram.

5. Sankaram sankaracharyam kesavam badarayanam Sutra-bhashya-krtau vande bhagavantau punah punah.

6. Isvaro gurur-atmeti murti-bheda-vibhagine Vyomavad-vyapta-dehaya dakshinamurtaye namah.

1. Om, Obeisance to Lord Brahma and others, to the propounders of the supreme knowledge of Brahman, to the traditional line of Seers and Sages and to the great and the revered ones; obeisance to the Spiritual Masters. 2. I am Brahman who is free from all evil, who is a mass of Consciousness and the innermost essence in all.

3. I always offer my prostrations to the supreme Brahman, Lord Narayana, the creator Brahma born from the lotus, the great sage Vasishtha, Sakti and his son Parasara, Vyasa, Suka, the great Gaudapadacharya, Govindapada, the best among the Yogins, his disciple Sri Sankaracharya, then to his disciples Padmapadacharya, Hastamalakacharya, Totakacharya and Suresvar- acharya, the author of the gloss on commentaries of his Master and Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and all my other spiritual masters.

4. I bow down to Sri Sankaracharya who is the repository of all the Vedas, the Smrtis and the Puranas, the store-house of all compassion and whose feet are adorable and who is the bestower of all auspiciousness upon the whole world.

5. Obeisance to Sankaracharya who is Sankara himself and to Vyasa who is Narayana himself, the authors of the commentary on the Brahma Sutras and the Sutras themselves respectively.

6. Prostrations to that Supreme Lord in the form of Dakshinamurti, whose body is all pervasive like space and who

manifests as God, Guru and the Atman, the apt difference among the three being only in name and form.

SIVA-MANASA-PUJA

(Sri Sankaracharya)

ॐ श्री गणेशाय निः

नैः कस्पपतिासनं हिजलैः मनानं च हदव्याम्ब्बरि् ्

नानार्नववभूवषतं ंृगिृदिोदाङ्ककतं ंचन्दनि्।्

जातीचम्प्पकबबपवपत्ररगचतं पुष्पं च धूपं ंतथा

दीपं ंदेव दयातनधे पशुपते हृक्स्पपतं गृह्यति्॥्१॥

सौवणे नवर्निंडरगचते पात्रेघृतृं ंपायसं ं

भक्ष्यंपञ्चववधंपयोदगधयुतुं रम्प्भाफल पानक्ि।्

शाकानियुतं ंजलं रुगचकरं कपूरयिण्डोज्जवलि् ्

ताम्प्बूलूं ंिनसा िया ववरगचतं भक्या रभो मवीकुरु ॥२॥

छत्रंचिारयोयुगंय व्यजनकं चादशकंय तनिलयि् ्

वीणाभेररृिदृङ्गकिालकलागीतं च नूयंतथा।

साष्टाङ्गं रणततः मतुततबियववधा ह्येतत् ्सिमतं िया

सङ्कपपेन सिवपतंय ंतव ववभो पूजूां गिृाण रभो ॥ ३ ॥

आ्ाि वें् गगररजा ितः सिचराः राणाः शरीरं ग्गिू ्

पूजा ते ववषयोपभोगरचना तनरा सिागधस्मथततः।

सञ्चारः पदयोः रदक्षिणववगधः मतोत्राखण सवायगगरो

यद्यक्् यिकरोसि तत्तदखिलं शम्प्भो तवाराधन्् ्॥४॥

करचरणकृत वाक्कायज किजंय वा

श्रवणनयनज वा ानस वापराध्ि।्

ववहितिववहितं वा सवियतत् ्ीिमव

जय जय करुणाब्धे ग्श्रीादेव शम्प्भो ॥५॥

Om Sri Ganesaya Namah

Ratnaih kalpitam-asanam hima-jalaih snanam cha divya-mbaram Nana-ratna vibhushitam mrga-mada'moda'nkitam chandanam Jati-champaka-bilva-patra-rachitam pushpam cha dhupam tatha Dipam deva daya-nidhe pasupate hrt-kalpitam grhyatam. (1)

Sauvarne nava-ratna-khanda-rachite patre ghrtam payasam Bhakshyam pancha-vidham payo-dadhi-yutam rambha-phalam Panakam Sakanam-ayutam jalam ruchikaram karpura-khandojjvalam
Tambulam manasa maya virachitam bhaktya prabho svikuru. (2)

Chhatram chamarayor-yugam vyajanakam cha'darsakam nirmalam

Vina-bheri-mrdanga-kahala-kala gitam cha nrtyam tatha

Sashtangam pranatih stutir-bahuvidha hyetat samastam maya

Sankalpena samarpitam tava vibho pujam grhana prabho. (3)

Atma tvam girija matih sahacharah pranah sariram grham

Puja te vishayopabhoga-rachana nidra Samadhi-sthitih

Sancharah padayoh pradakshina-vidhih stotrani sarva giro

Yadyat karma karomi tattad-akhilam sambho tava'radhanam. (4)

Kara-charana-krtam vakkayajam karmajam va

Sravana-nayanajam va manasam va'paradham

Vihitam-avihitam va Sarvam-etat kshamasva

Jaya jaya karunabdhe sri mahadeva sambho. (5)

1. A seat made of precious stones, a bath in delightfully cool water, a splendid apparel bedecked with various gems, sandal-paste perfumed with musk, jasmine and champaka flowers arranged upon Bilva leaves, incense as well as light-O Lord, thou ocean of mercy, do accept these offerings conceived in my mind to Thee, O Lord of creatures.

2. Clarified butter, milk porridge, the fivefold food, a cooling drink of milk and curds with plantains, vegetables of innumerable varieties, tasteful water and betel scented with camphor--all these food-offerings placed in golden vessels which are set with the nine precious jewels have I conceived in my mind out of love and devotion; do accept them, O Lord.

3. Chhatra (umbrella), a couple of Chamaras for fanning and a stainless mirror; music of the lute, kettledrum, Mridanga and Kahala and singing together with dancing; obeisance by prostration of the eight limbs of the body, various hymns and prayers--all these, O Supreme Ruler, I duly offer to Thee mentally; do accept my worship, O Almighty Lord.

Thou art (my) Atman; my intellect is Girija (the daughter of Himalaya and the consort of Siva); my sense-organs are Thy attendants; (this) body is Thy temple; ministering to the enjoyment of the objects of the senses is (my) worship to Thee; (my) sleep is Samadhi; all (my) moving about on foot is the rite of perambulation (walking round the deity); all the words (spoken) are hymns to Thee; whatever works I do, are Thy worship, O Sambhu (Giver of happiness).

5. Sins committed in action with the hands and feet, or by speech, or by the body, or by the ears and eyes or those done in thought--forgive all these sins whether of commission or omission. Glory be unto thee, Thou ocean of mercy! Glory be unto Thee, O Mahadeva (God of gods)! O Sambhu!

PARA PUJA

(Sri Sankaracharya)

अिण्डे ैसस्चचदानन्दे तनववकयपपैकैरूवपखण

स्मथतेऽद्ववतीयभावेऽेवप कथं ंपूजा ववधीयते ॥१॥

पूणमययाविानं ंकुत्र सवाधयारमय चासनि्।ं

मवचछमय पाद्यिर्घ्यं ंच शुद्धमयाचिनंकुतः ॥२॥

तनिलयमय कुतः मनानं वासो ववश्वोदरमय च ।

अगोत्रमय व्वणमयय कुतमतमयोपवीतक्ि ॥३॥

तनलेपमय कुतो गन्धः पुष्पं ंतनवासयनमय च।

तनववशेयषेमय का भूषूा कोऽलङ्कारो तनराकृतेः ॥४॥

तनरञ्जनमय ककं धूपैदीपैवाय सवसयाक्षिणः ।

तनजानन्दैकतृपूतमय नैवैद्यं ककं भवेहदि ॥५॥

ववश्वानस्न्यतुमतमय ककं ताम्ब्बूलूं रकपपते।े

मवयंरंकाशगचरूपो योऽसावकाहयदभासकः ॥ ६ ॥

रदक्षिणा ह्यनन्तमय ह्यद्वयमय कुतो नततः।

वेदवाक्यैरैवेद्यमय कुतः मतोत्रं ंववधीयते ॥७॥

मवयंरकाशिानमय कुतो नीराजनं ववभोः ।

अन्तबहयिश्च पूणमयय कथिुद्वासनं भवेत् ॥८॥

एविव परापूजा सवावयमथासु सवदया ।

एकबुद्या तु देवेशे ववधेया ब्रह्विवत्तिैः ॥ ९ ॥

Akhande sachchidanande nirvikalpaika rupini
Sthite'dvitiya bhave'api katham puja vidhiyate. (1)

Purnasya'vahanam kutra sarva'dharasya cha'sanam
Svacchasya padyam arghyam cha suddhasya'chamanam kutah. (2)

Nirmalasya kutah snanam vaso visvodarasya cha
Agotrasya tvavarnasya kutastasyopavitakam. (3)

Nirlepasya kuto gandhah pushpam nirvasanasya cha
Nirviseshasya ka bhusha ko'lamkaro nirakrteh. (4)

Niranjanasya kim dhupair dipair-va sarva sakshinah
Nija'nandaika-trptasya naivedyam kim bhaved iha. (5)

Visvanandayitus-tasya kim tambulam prakalpate
Svayam-prakasa-chidrupo yo'savarkadi-bhasakah. (6)

Pradakshina hyanantasya hyadvayasya kuto natih
Veda-vakyair-avedyasya kutah stotram vidhiyate. (7)

Svayam-prakasmanasya kuto nirajanam vibhoh
Antar-bahischa purnasya katham udvasanam bhavet. (8)

Evam-eva para-puja sarva'vasthasu sarvada Eka-buddhya tu devese vidheya brahma-vit-tamaih. (9) To this undivided Whole, Existence-Knowledge Bliss-
Absolute, free of all modifications of the mind, the one and the non-dual, how can Puja (worship), be prescribed! (1) How can one perform the ritual of Avahana (invocation) for Him
who is the Whole! How can one offer Asana (a seat) for Him in whom everything is seated! How can one offer Padya (water to wash the feet) and Arghya (water to wash the hands) to Him who is cleanliness itself! (2) Where is Abhisheka (holy bath) for Him who is purity itself and
similarly, how Vastram (clothe) can be offered to Him of whose body the whole Cosmos forms one part viz., the belly! What to speak of Upavitam (the sacred thread) to Him who has neither Gotra nor Varna (neither genus nor class)! (3) How can we apply sweet smelling sandal (Chandana) on Him
in whom nothing will stick! Where is the place for Pushpa (flowers) for Him who is free from all smell! To Him who is Nirvisesha (attributeless) what ornament can be offered! And as He is Nirakara (formless) who can adorn Him! (4) Why the offering of incense to Him who is Niranjana (free from
all taint and stain)! To the Sarva-sakshi (witness of all) to the Consciousness which illumines all, how can one offer Dipa (the waving of light)! As He is always Nijanandaika Trpta (contented with the Atmic bliss) where is the necessity for Naivedyam (offering of food)! (5)

Is there any meaning to offer Tambula (betel leaves, etc.,) to Him who is the source of joy to this whole universe and who is self-effulgent, whose form is Consciousness and who illumines these great luminaries like the sun and the moon! (6)

How to perform Pradakshina (perambulations) around Him who is the Infinite! How to perform Namaskara (reverential salutation) to Him who is non-dual Being! Who can chant Stotra (praise) when Vedas themselves are not able to speak anything about Him! (7)

How to offer Niranjana (waving of lights and camphor) to one who is Himself Self-effulgence! And how to do Udvasana (send-off with prayer to return) to Him who is the full inside and outside! (8)

Thus should great knowers of Brahman perform this Para Puja (transcendental worship) of the Lord always in all conditions with one-pointed mind. (9)

NIRVANA-SHATKAM

(SriSankaracharya)

निोबुद्यिङ्कारगचत्तातन निां

न कणं ंन स्जह्वा न च घ्राणनेत्रे।

न च व्यिो भूसिन यतेजो न वायु ु

स्श्चदानन्दरूपः सशवोऽि सेशवोऽ्ि ॥१॥

न च राणसंज्ञो न वै ैपञ्चवायु ु

न यवा सप्तधातुनु यवा पञ्चकोशः ।

न वाक् पाखणपादौ न चोपमथपायू ू

गचदानन्दरूपः सशवोऽि सेशवोऽ्ि ॥ २ ॥

न ि द्वेषरागौ न ि लोभिौ

दि नैवै ि नैव िास् यभयावः ।

न धिो न चाथो न किो न ि ि-

स्श्चदानन्दरूपः सशवोऽ सिशवोऽ्ि ि्॥ ३ ॥

न पुण्यं ंन पापं न सौख्यं न दिुं

न िन्त्रो न तीथं ंन वेदा न यज्ञाः ।

अि भेजनंनैवै भोज्यं न भोक्ता

गचदानन्दरूपः सशवोऽ सिशवोऽ्ि ि्॥४॥

न ि ्युनशयङ्का न ि जाततभेदः

वपता नैव ि नैवै िाता च जन्ि

न बन्धुन यसित्रं गुरुनैव सशष्य-

स्श्चदानन्दरूपः सशवोऽ सिशवोऽ्ि ि्॥ ५ ॥

अि तनववकयपपो तनराकाररूपो

ववभुवाचच सवत्रय सवेस्न्रयाणि् ्।

न चासंगंतंनैव ि्स्तन यबन्ध-

स्श्चदानन्दरूपः सशवोऽ सिशवोऽ्ि ि्॥६ ॥

Mano-buddhy-ahankara-chittani na'ham
na karnam na jihva na cha ghrana-netre
Na cha vyoma bhumir-na tejo na vayuh
chidananda-rupah sivo'ham sivo'ham. (1)

Na cha prana-samjno na vai pancha-vayur
na va sapta dhatur-na va pancha-kosah
Na vak-pani-padau na chopastha payu
chidananda-rupah sivo'ham sivo'ham.(2)

Na me dvesha-ragau na me lobha-mohau
mado naiva me naiva matsarya-bhavah
Na dharmo na chartho na kamo na mokshah
chidananda-rupah sivo'ham-sivo'ham. (3)

Na punyam na papam na saukhyam na dhukham
na mantro na tirtham na veda na yajnah
Aham bhojanam naiva bhojyam na bhokta
chidananda-rupah sivo'ham sivo'ham. (4)

Na mrtyur na sanka na me jati-bhedah
pita naiva me naiva mata cha Janma
Na bandhur na mitram gurur naiva sishyah
chidananda-rupah sivo'ham sivo'ham. (5)

Aham nirvikalpo nirakara-rupo vibhut-vaccha sarvatra sarvendriyanam na cha sangatam naiva muktir na bandhah chidananda-rupah sivo'ham sivo'ham. (6) 1. I am not the mind, nor the intellect, neither the ego nor the subconscious; I am also not the ear, not the nose, not the eye; I am neither the ether nor the earth, neither the fire nor the air; I am the most auspicious Lord Siva in the form of Consciousness-Bliss. 2. I am not the vital force or its five subdivisions. I am also not the seven ingredients of the body or the five sheaths; I am neither the organ of speech nor the hand, nor the leg, neither the sex organ nor the anus; I am the most auspicious Lord Siva in the form of Consciousness-Bliss. 3. In me there is neither desire nor hatred, neither covetousness, nor delusion; neither pride nor jealousy; I have no aims of life (viz., righteousness, earning wealth, fulfilment of desire and liberation); I am the most auspicious Lord Siva in the form of Consciousness-Bliss. 4. In me there is neither merit nor sin, neither happiness nor unhappiness, there is neither Mantra for Japa nor holy waters, neither Veda nor sacrifice; I am neither the enjoyer nor the enjoyed nor the enjoyment; I am the most auspicious Lord Siva in the form of Consciousness-Bliss. 5. In me there is no doubt about death, no difference in the social status; I have neither father nor mother nor birth, neither relation nor friend, there is neither the Guru nor the disciple; I am the most auspicious Lord Siva in the form of Consciousness-Bliss.

6. I am changeless; I am formless; I am the Supreme, I am the all-pervasive Lord of all the sense organs everywhere; no attachment for me; for me there is neither bondage nor liberation; I am the most auspicious Lord Siva in the form of Consciousness-Bliss.

ALL THIS IS THE SUPREME TRUTH

(Sri Sadasiva Brahmendra Swami)

सवं ंब्रह्मियिंरे रे ।

सवं ंब्रह्मियि् ॥१॥

ककं वचनीयं ककिवचनीयि् ।

ककं रचनीयं ककिरचनीयि् ॥ २ ॥ (सवय

...)

ककं पठनीयि् ककिपठनीयि् ।

ककं भजनीयं ककिभजनीयि् ॥ ३ ॥ (सवय.)

ककं बोद्धव्यं ककिबोद्धव्यि् ।

ककं भोक्तव्यं ककिभोक्तव्यि् ॥४॥ (सवय...)

सवत्रय सदिांसय्ानि् ।

कतव्ययंभोुस्कतनधानि्॥५॥सवं् (.ं..)

Sarvambrahma-mayam re re sarvam brahma mayam. (1)

Kim vachaniyam kim-avachaniyam
kim rachaniyam kim-arachaniyam. (2) (Sarvam...)

Kim pathaniyam kim apathaniyam
Kim bhajaniyam kim abhajaniyam. (3) (Sarvam...)
Kim boddhavyam kim-aboddhavyamdem
kim bhoktavyam kim-abhoktavyam. (4) (Sarvam...)

Sarvatra sada hamsa-dhyanam,
kartavyam bho mukti-nidhanam. (5) (Sarvam...)
Lo! Behold!
All this is the Absolute,
All this is the Absolute. (1)

What is there to speak!
What is there that should not be spoken!
What is there to write!
What is there that should not be written! (2)

What is there to study!
What is there that should not be studied!
What is there to worship!
What is there that should not be worshipped! (3)

What is there to know!
What is there which should not be known!
What is there to be experienced!
What is there which should not be experienced! (4)

O man, your duty is to meditate on the Self,
everywhere, at all times. It is the seat of Liberation. (5)

ASHTAVAKRA GITA

(II-11 to 14)

ओ अिं निो िह्यं ंववनाशो यमय नास्मत िे ।

ब्रह्ाहिदमतम्प्बपयन्यतं जगन्नाशेऽवप ततष्ठतः ॥ ११ ॥

ओ अिं निो िह्यैकोऽ दिवानवप ।

क्वगचन्न गन्ता नागन्ता व्याप्य ववश्वमिवस्मथतः॥१२॥

ओ अिं निो िह्यं ंदिो नामतिी ि्सिः।

असंमपृशूय शरीरेण येन ववश्व गचरं धृतू ्॥१३॥

ओ अिं निो िह्यं यमय़ंि नास्मत ककञ्चन ।

अथवा यमय िें सवं य़द्वाङ्निसगोचरि्॥् १४॥

Aho aham namo mahyam vinaso yasya nasti me

Brahmadi-stamba-paryantam jagan-nase'pi tishthatah. (11)

Aho aham namo mahyam eko'ham dehavan-api
Kvachin-na ganta na'ganta vyapya visvam-avasthitah. (12)

Aho aham namo mahyam daksho nasti'ha mat-samah
Asamsprsya sarirena yena visvam chiram dhrtam. (13)

Aho aham namo mahyam yasya me nasti kinchana
Athava yasya me sarvam yad-vang-manasa-gocharam. (14)

Marvellous am I! Adoration to Myself, who survive even the destruction of the whole universe-from the Creator down to a blade of grass-and who know no decay too. (11)

Marvellous am I! Adoration to Myself who though with a body, am One, who neither go to nor come from anywhere but ever abide pervading the universe. (12)

Marvellous am I! Salutations to Myself! There is none known so competent as Me who am holding the universe eternally without touching it with My body. (13)

Marvellous am I! Prostrations to Myself who have nothing or all that which is accessible to speech and mind belongs to Me only. (14)

YOGA VASISHTHA

(I-i-1 to 3)

यतः सवाखयण भूतातन रततभास्न्त स्मथतातन च ।

यत्रैवौपशिं यास्न्त तमै स्यि्ने निः ॥१॥

ज्ञाता ज्ञानंतथा ज्ञेयें रष्टा दशनय दृश्यभूः ।

कताय ेतुः किया यमित् ्तमै ज्ञप्य्ि्ने निः ॥२॥

मफुरस्न्तसीकरा यमिदानन्दमयाम्ब्बरेऽवनौ।

सवेषेांजीवनं तमै ब्रह्निन्दि्ने निः॥३॥

Yatahsarvanibhutanipratibhantisthitanicha

Yatraivo'pasamam yanti tasmai satyatmane namah (1)

Jnata jnanam tatha jneyam drashta

darsana-drsyabhuh

Karta hetuh kriya yasmat tasmai jnaptyatmane namah (2)

Sphuranti sikara yasmad-anandasya'mbare'vanau

Sarvesham jivanam tasmai brahmanandatmane namah (3)

1. Salutations to that Reality in which all the elements and all the animate and inanimate beings shine as if they have an independent existence, and in which they exist for a time and into which they merge.

2. Salutations to that Consciousness which is the source of the apparently distinct threefold divisions of knower, knowledge and known, seer, sight and seen, doer, doing and deed.

3. Salutations to that Bliss Absolute (the ocean of Bliss) which is the life of all beings, whose happiness and unfoldment is derived from the shower of spray from that Ocean of Bliss.

VIVEKACHUDAMANI 465-471

(Sri Sankaracharya)

पररपूर्णियनाद्यन्तिरिेयिववकियि् ।

एकिेवाद्वयं ब्रह्मि नि नानास्मत ककञ्चन ॥४६५ ॥

सद्धनंगचद्धनंतन्यिानन्दघनिकियि्।

एकिेवाद्वयं ब्रह्मि नि नानास्मत ककञ्चन ॥ ४६६ ॥

रग्योकरसं पूर्णियनन्तं सवर्तार्णियोु्।

एकिेवाद्वयं ब्रह्मि नि नानास्मत ककञ्चन ॥४६७॥

अिेयिनुपुादेयिनादेयिनाश्रयि्

एकिेवाद्वयं ब्रह्मि नि नानास्मत ककञ्चन ।। ४६८ ।।

तनगुणंय ंतनष्कलं सूक्ष्मि तिनववकयपपं तनरञ्जनि्।

एकिेवाद्वयं ब्रह्मि नि नानास्मत ककञ्चन ॥ ४६९ ।।

अतनरूप्यमवरूपं यन्निोवाचिागोचरि्।

एकिवाद्वयं ब्रह्मि नि नानास्मत ककञ्चन ॥ ४७० ।।

सस्दृिधं मवतः ससद्धं शुद्धं बुद्धिनीदृशि्।

एकिवाद्वयं ब्रह्मि नि नानास्मत ककञ्चन ॥४७१॥

Paripurnam-anadyantam-aprameyam-avikriyam
Ekameva 'dvayam brahma neha nana'sti kinchana. (465)

Sadghanam chidghanam nityam-anandaghanam-akriyam
Ekamevadvayam brahma neha nana'sti kinchana. (466)

Pratyag-ekarasam purnam-anantam sarvatomukhamaail
Ekameva dvayam brahma neha nana'sti kinchana. (467)

Aheyam-anupadeyam anadeyam-anasrayam
Ekameva'dvayam brahma neha nana'sti kinchana. (468)

Nirgunam nishkalam sukshmam nirvikalpam niranjanam
Ekameva'dvayam brahma neha nana'sti kinchana. (469)

Anirupya-svarupam yan-mano-vacham agocharam
Ekameva'dvayam brahma neha nana'sti kinchana.(470)

Satsamrddham svatah siddham suddham buddham-anidrsam Ekameva' dvayam brahma neha nana'sti kinchana. (471) 465) The ever full, without beginning and end, inscrutable, and changless is Brahman the supreme who is one only and non-dual and in whom there is not even a trace of duality. 466) A mass (as it were) of Existence- Knowledge- Bliss
Absolute, eternal, and devoid of any action is Brahman, the supreme who is one only and non-dual and in whom there is not even a trace of duality.

467) The internal subjective essence, the infinite, endless and all pervasive is Brahman the Supreme who is one only and non-dual and in whom there is not even a trace of duality.

468) That which can be neither rejected nor accepted and which is supportless is Brahman the supreme who is one only and non-dual in whom there is not even a trace of duality.

469) Attributeless, partless, subtle, without any disturbance and taintless is Brahman the supreme who is one only and non-dual and in whom there is not even a trace of duality.

470) He whose real nature is incomprehensible and who is not perceivable by mind and speech is Brahman the supreme who is one only and non-dual and in whom there is not even a trace of duality.

471) Self-existing, self-evident, pure, intelligence absolute and unlike any finite object is Brahman the supreme who is one only and non-dual and in whom there is not even a trace of duality.

BRAHMA JNANAVALI MALA

(1, 2, 16-21)

सकृचरवणिातेरेण ब्रह्ज्ञिानं यतो भवेते्।

ब्रह्ज्ञिानावलिीाला सवषयां ि्ोससद्धये ॥ १ ॥

असङ्गोऽसिङ्गोऽसिङ्गोऽि पुनुः पुनः ।

सस्चचदानन्दरूपोऽिीिीिवाव्ययः ॥ २ ॥)

तापत्रयववतनिुक्यतो दैत्रयववलिणः ।

अवमथत्रयसाक्ष्यस्मि ि्चोिवाव्ययः ॥ १६ ॥

दृग्ददृश्यौ द्वौ पदाथौ मतः परमपरववलिणौ।

दृग्दब्रह्ि दृश्यंायेतत सववेयदान्तडडस्ण्डः ॥१७॥

अि सिीतत यो ववद्याद्ववववचयैवं पुनः पुनः ।

स एव ि्ुक्तः सन् ्ववद्वातनतत वेदास्न्डस्ण्डः ॥ १८ ॥

घटकुड्याहदकं सवं ंि्ृवृत्तकिाात्रैव च।

तद्वद्ब्रह्ि जग्सवसयितत वेदान्तडडस्ण्डः ॥१९॥

ब्रह्ि स्यं जगस्न्थ्या जीवो ब्रह्ैवै नापरः

अनेने वेद्यंसचछास्त्रसितत वेदान्तडडस्ण्डिः ॥२०॥

अन्तज्योततबहयिज्योततः र्यग्दज्योततः पराᳬपरः ।

ज्योततज्योततः मवयंज्योततरिᳬज्योततः सशवोऽमम्प्यि् ॥ २१ ॥

Sakrt-sravana-matrena brahma-jnanam yato bhavet
Brahma-jnanavali-mala sarvesham moksha-siddhaye. (1)

Asango'ham asango'ham asango'ham punah punah
Sachchidananda-rupo 'ham ahameva'ham avyayah. (2)

Tapa-traya-vinirmukto deha-traya-vilakshanah
Avastha-traya-sakshyasmi cha'ahameva'ham-avyayah. (16)

Drg-drsyau dvau padarthau stah paraspara-vilakshanau
Drg brahma drsyam mayeti sarva-vedanta-dindimah. (17)

Aham sakshiti yo vidyad vivichyaivam punah punah
Sa eva muktah san vidvan-iti vedanta-dindimah. (18)

Ghata-kudyadikam sarvam mrttika-matram-eva cha
Tadvad-brahma jagat sarvam iti vedanta-dindimah. (19)

Brahma satyam jagan-mithya jivo brahmai'va naparah

Anena vedyam sacchastram iti vedanta-dindimah. (20)

Antar-jyotir bahir-jyotih pratyag-jyotih parat-parah Jyotir-jyotih svayam-jyotir-atma-jyotih sivo'smyaham. (21) 1) Here is a series of attributes of Brahman by hearing which even once, all would get liberation.

2) I am unattached, I am unattached, I am unattached again and again I say. I am of the form of Existence Knowledge-Bliss-Absolute alone. I am what I am. I am immutable indeed.

16) I am free from the three kinds of suffering (the Adhyatmika, Adhibhautika and Adhidaivika). I am different from the three bodies (gross, subtle, and causal). I am the witness of the three states (waking, dream and deep sleep). I am what I am. I am immutable indeed.

17) There are two things, viz., the Seer and the seen, which are different from one another; of these the Seer is Brahman, the supreme and the seen is Maya, unreal superimposition-thus proclaims Vedanta.

по 18) Only he who reflects and enquires about the Truth again and again and thereby knows that the 'I' is the witness, is wise and becomes liberated-thus proclaims Vedanta.

19) Even as an earthen jar, a wall, and all such things are earth alone, the whole of creation is Brahman, the supreme alone-thus proclaims Vedanta.

20) That which is to be known from all the scriptures is that Brahman alone is the Truth, the whole universe is false appearance and the individual being is Brahman alone and nothing else-thus proclaims Vedanta.

21) I am Siva, the internal light as also the external light, the universal spirit in all beings, who transcends the unmanifest Isvara, who is the light of all lights and who is self-illuminating and the light of the Self.

SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM

(I-i-1)

जन्ाद्यिमय यतोऽन्वयाहदतरतश्चथेष्वसभज्ञः मवराट्

तेनेब्रह्ह्ृदा य आहदकवये ्िुहुयस्न्त य्सूरूयः ।

तेजोवाररृदृां यथा ववतनियो यत्र बत्रसगोऽृषृि

धाम्ना मवेन सदा तनरमतकुिकं स्यंपरं धीिहि ॥

Janmady asya yato 'nvayad-itaratas-cha'rtheshvar abhijnah svarat

tene brahma hrda ya adikavaye muhyanti yat surayah

Tejo-vari-mrdam yatha vinimayo yatra trisargo'mrsha

dhamna svena sada nirasta-kuhakam

satyam param dhimahi

We meditate on that transcendent reality from whom the universe springs up, in whom it abides and into whom it returns, because he is invariably present in all existing things and distinct from all non-entities. We meditate on him who is self-conscious and self-effulgent, who revealed to Brahma by his mere will the veda that causes bewilderment even to the greatest sages, on account of whom the creation shines as a

reality and who excludes illusion by his own self-effulgent glory.

(II-ix-32 to 35)

ाहमेवासमेवाग्रे नान्यद्यत् ्सदस्परि्।्

पश्चादहं यदेतच्च योऽवशिष्येत सोऽस्म्यहम्॥ ३२ ॥

ऋतेऽर्थं ंयर्तीयेत न रतीयेत चात्मन ।

तद्विद्यादात्मनो मायांयथाऽऽभासो यथा तमः ॥ ३३ ॥

यथा महान्ति भूतानि भूतेषूच्चावचेष्वनु।

प्रविष्टान्यप्रविष्टानि तथा तेषु न तेष्वहम्॥ ३४ ॥

एतावदेव ज्ञिज्ञासयं तत्त्वज्ञिज्ञासुनाऽऽत्मनः।

अन्वयव्यतिरेकाभ्यां यत्स्यादात्मनि सर्वत्र सदा।।३५।।

Aham eva 'sam eva'gre na'nyad yatsad-asat-param
Paschad aham yad etachcha yo'vasishyeta so'smy aham (32)

Rte 'rtham yat pratiyeta na pratiyeta cha'tmani
Tad vidyad atmano mayam yatha'bhaso yatha tamah (33)

Yatha mahanti bhutani bhutesu'chcha'vacheshv anu
Pravishtany apravishtani tatha teshu na teshv aham (34)

Etavad eva jijnasyam tattva-jijnasuna 'tmanah Anvaya-vyatirekabhyam yat syat sarvatra sarvada (35) Verily, in the beginning I alone existed; naught else existed-
neither existence nor non-existence in the relative sense. Afterwards, too, I exist as all this and all that remains after all this has been created. The power that causes the perception in my being of objects which do not exist in reality, is my own maya or illusory power. It functions like a reflection, or like smoke veiling its own source (fire). Even as one may say that the gross elements enter or do not enter the bodies of living beings, depending upon the sense in which it is said, one may say that I have entered the bodies of living beings as the indwelling spirit or that I have not so entered, on account of my being infinite. The real seeker after truth should constantly seek the truth by the negative (not this, not this) method and the affirmative method (All indeed is Brahman).

(XII-xiii-23)

निा सङ्कीतनंय यमयसवपयापरणाशनि्।

रणिोदु:ुिशिनमतंनिार्सिररंपरि्॥

Nama-sankirtanamyasya sarva-papa- pranasanam,

Pranamo dhukha-samanas tam namami harim param

Salutations to Hari, chanting whose names frees one from all sins and sorrow.

GOD IS ONE

(Swami Udayanacharya)

यंशैवैाः सिुपासते सशव इतत ब्रह्ेति वेदेास्न्तनो

बौद्धा बुद्ध इतत रिाणपटवः कतेतत नैयौतयकाः

(अियस्न्नय्थ जैनैशासनरताः कितत ीांसंकाः

(ैमतवाः किमतुररतत कियापररता अपलेतत म्प्दिाः)

सोऽयंवो ववदधातुवास्ुछतफलंत्रैलौक्यनाथो ररः।।

Yam saivahsamupasate sivaitibrahmeti vedantino

Buddha Bauddha iti pramanapatavah karteti naiyayikah

Arhannity atha jaina-sasana-ratah karmeti mimamsakah

(Kraistavah kristur-iti kriyapara-rata alleti mahammadah)

So'yam vo vidadhatu vanchhita-phalam

trailokya-natho harih.

He whom the Saivites worship as Lord Siva, the Vedantins as Brahman, the Buddhists as Buddha, the Naiyayikas well versed in the science of logic as Karta (the agent of action), the Jains as Arhat, the ritualists as Karma (the Christians engaged in action as Christ, the Muslims as Allah)-may that Lord Hari, the Lord of the three worlds fulfill all our desires.

AVOID WORRY

(Panchadasi-vii-168)

(SwamiVidyaranya)

यदभावव न तद्भावव भाववचेन्नतदन्यथा।

इतत गचन्तावववषघ्नोऽयिबोधो भ्रितनवतकय ः ।।

Yad abhavinatadbhavibhavi chennatad anyatha

Iti chinta-vishaghno'yambodho bhrama-nivartakah.

That which is not to happen will never happen; that which is to happen will certainly happen exactly as it should happen; this delusion-destroying knowledge does away with the poison of worry and anxiety.

ISAVASYA UPANISHAD-I

ॐईशावामयसिदं सवं ंयस्कञ्च जगयां जगत्।

तेनय्क्तेनेभुञ्जुजीथिागृधृः कमयस्मवद्धनि्॥

OmIsavasyam idam Sarvam yatkincha jagatyam jagat

Tenatyaktena bhunjitha ma grdhah kasya-svid dhanam.

All this-whatsoever moves in this universe-should be covered by theLord. Protect (your self) through that renunciation. Do not covet any one's wealth for whose is wealth?

GOD AND WORLD-NOT DIFFERENT

(Swami Dayananda Saraswati)

रिररेव जगत् ंजगदेव िररः िररतो जगतो न हि सभन्नतनू।

इतत यमयितत: परिाथगयततःस नरोभवसागरित्तुतरतत॥

Harir-evajagat-jagadevaharihHarito jagatonahibhinna tanu

Iti yasyamatih paramartha-gatih sa naroBhava-sagarm-uttarati.

Lord Hari (the all-pervasive Supreme Lord) is verily the world; the world is certainly Lord Hri and ther is not even the least difference between the two; he who understands and realises this truth is saved from the ocean of Samsara, the mundane life of birth and death.

THREE SINS TO BE TRANSCENDED

(Avadhuta Gita-viii-l)

व्द्यात्रया व्यापकतिातते या्नेनेचेतःपरता िता ते।े

मतुया् िया वाक्परतिातातिमवतनयं् बत्रववधापराधान्॥ ्

Tvad-yatrayavyapakatahata tedhyanena chetah-parata hata te;

Stutya maya vak-parata hata te Kshamasva nityam trividha'paradhan.

This verseentreatspardon from the Lord for three "sins" committeddailybythedevotees and aspirants. What are they? They are:(1)throughpilgrimage one rides rough-shod over the all-pervasiveandbeyond-space- nature of the supreme; (2) through meditationonesets at naught the great Vedic declarationthattheAtman-Brahman is beyond the reach of the mind and(3)throughverses of praise one, without any consideration,floutsthetranscendental nature of the Absolute which isbeyondallspeech. This verse reveals the great truth that Lordtranscendsspace and time, thought and speech.

GOD IS EVERYTHING

(Svetasvatara Upanishad-IV-3)

वं् मत्रीवं् पुिानससवं् कुिारउत वा कुिारी।

वं् जीणोदण्डेनेवञ्चससवं् जातो भवसस ववश्वतोिुः॥

Tvam stritvampumanasitvamkumarauta vakumari

Tvam jirno dandena vanchasi tvam jato bhavasi visvatomukhah.

Thou art the woman,Thouart the man, Thou art the youth and also the maiden;Thouartthe aged man who totters along

leaning on the walking stick; Thou art born with faces turned in all directions.

Nasadiya Sukta

Hymn of Creation (Rigveda 10-129-1 to 7)

नासदासीन्नो सदासीत् ्तदानींनासीरजो नो व्योा परो यत् ्।

ककिावरीवः कु कमय शिन्यनम्भः ककिासी गिनं गभीरि् ्॥१॥

Naasadaaseenno sadaaseet tadaaneem naaseedrajo no vyomaa paro yat, Kimaavareevah kuha kasya sarmannaabhbhah kimaaseedgahanam gabheeram. (1) 1. Then (1) there was neither Being nor Non-being (2); there was neither the (physical) space (rajah) nor the Supreme Space (3). What was there as a cover and where(4)? Whose was the blessedness (sarman) (5)? Was there water, deep and unfathomable? Nasadiya Sukta hymn, hymn of creation, is one of the most
profoundly philosophical mystical and beautiful of Vedic hymns. Sayana in his commentary states that the hymn refers to the state of the universe during pralaya or cosmic dissolution. How then the seer of this Mantra who must have lived millions of years later know it? In the realm of the Absolute
the past and the future are contained in the present. Creation is a timeless process. As Swami Vivekananda's experience contained in his 'Song on Samadhi' shows, in the superconscious state, as the soul rises through different levels of consciousness to the Absolute it encounters the stages of creation in the reverse order. In other words this Sukta is the

expression of aprofoundmysticalexperienceoftheoriginof creation. The seerofthiswonderfulhymnisunknown.

1. The first partofthislinenegatestimeandthesecondhalf negates space.

2. ChhandogyaUpanishad6-2-1statesthatatthebeginning there wasonlypureBeing(sat)withoutasecond.But TaittireyaUp.2-7-1statesthatatthebeginningtherewasonly Non-being(asat),i.e.,theunmanifestedconditionofBeing. The presenthymnnegatesbothBeingandNon-beingbecause these areonlyrelativeterms.SomeWesternscholarsseethe rudimentsoftheSamkhyaphilosophyinthishymnandtake sat as implyingPurushaandasatasPrakriti.

3. RajahisinterpretedbySayanaas'theworld'andby Western scholars as 'air.'

4. Therewasnocoverastherewasnothingtobecovered.

5. Therewasnoenjoyer(bhokta)astheegohasnotgot differentiated.Sarmanisinterpretedby Sayanaas'enjoyment or fruitionofpainandpleasure,'andbyWesternscholarsas shelter protection,support,etc.

नियुरासीदितृंनतहियन्नरात्र्याअह्नआसीत्रकेतः।

आनीदवातं मवधया तदेकं तमिाद्धान्यन्न परः ककं चनास ॥२॥

Na mruturaa seedmrutamnatarhi na raatrayaa ahana aaseetpraketah, Aaneedavaatam svadhyaatadekam tasmaaddhaanyanna parahkimcanaasam.(2) 2. Then (1) there was neitherdeathimmortality(2);noranysign of day and night. That one(3),breathless,breathed(4)byits own power (5). Other thanthattherewasnothingbeyond.

In this hymn the seer is trying to express his ineffable experience of the Absolute through the negation of a series of antinomical concepts. The intended effect of this mode of expression is, like that of the koan of Zen, to break the conceptualisation process and lift the consciousness to a plane of unitary vision. It is perhaps a mistake to interpret this ancient hymn in terms of later philosophical concepts like Brahman, Maya, etc. It is best understood by meditating upon it.

1. The timeless period before creation.

2. Death takes place only in the manifested world or Virat; beyond that lies the world of Hiranyagarbha where only remains immortal. But the Absolute transcends even these states of human existence. Cf. yasya chbyamritam yasya mrityuh (Rigveda 10-121-2).

3. A significant phrase which refutes the Samkhya dualism of Prakriti and Purusha.

4. Asad shows no signs of life like respiration metabolism, etc.; nevertheless it is alive. Likewise in the primordial state Reality is life but without any signs of life-activity.

5. Sayana interprets svadhaya as 'by Maya' (svasmin dhiyate dhriyate asritya vartate iti svadha maya). The Tantric concept of chit-sakti and the Upanishadic concept of Prana may also be traced here. Cf. devatmasaktim svagunairnigudham of Sv. Up. 1-3.

ति आसीत् ्तिसा गूळ्ग्गि्रेऽरकेतंससललं सविया इदि ।

तुचछयेनाभ्ववपहितं ंयदासीत् ्तपसमतन्ाहिनाजायतैकि्॥ ्३॥

Tama aaseet tamasaa goolhamagre apreketam salilam sarvamaa edam, Tuchye naabhvapihitam yadaaseet

tapasastanmahinaa jaaya taikam. (3) 3. In the beginning (1) there was darkness (2) concealed (3) in
darkness; all this (4) was indistinguishable (5) water (6). That which was the all- encompassing (7) one covered by the void (8), manifested itself (9) by the greatness of Tapas (10).

1. That is, before the creation of the world.

2. It cannot be denied that the word darkness (tamas) here anticipates Sankara's concept of Maya or Ajnana.

3. From the root 'guh, 'to hide. As Sayana has pointed out, the expression clearly indicates that Ajnana is not mere absence of knowledge but 'something positive' (bhava rupam).

4. All this manifested world.

5. Apraketam-without a mark.

6. Salilam, i.e., salilam iva, like water, i.e., the primordial cause.

7. So says Sayana. Macdonell takes 'abhu' to mean 'coming into being' (similar ababhuva of verses 6 and 7).

8. Tucchya is the Vedic form of tuccha meaning void,
insignificant. It also means chaff. Just as the chaff encloses the grain so Maya enveloped the emerging reality of the world.

9. Ajayata was born, does not mean the creation of something new; rather it means the manifestation of something already present in a potential form.

10. Tapas means any concentrated effort. Here, according to Sayana, God's precognition or prevision of things to be created. Cf. yasya jnanamayam tapah (Mun. Up. 1-1-9). The infinite formless Reality preparing itself to assume form, the focussing of divine will-this is what tapas really means here.

किामतदग्रेसिवततयागधिनसोरेतःरथिंयदासीत्।

सतो बन्धुसतत तनरववन्दन् ृहृहद रततष्या कवयो ीनीषा ॥४ ॥

Kaamastadagre samavartataadhi manaso retah prathamam yadaaseet, Sato bandhumasati niravindan hrudi pratishyaa kavayo maneeshaa. (4) 4. In the beginning (1) there arose desire (kama) (2) which was
the first seed (retas) of mind (3). Sages seeking (pratishya) in their hearts through intuition (manisha) (4) discovered the connection (bandhu) of the Sat in the Asat (5).

1. In the previous stanza it was mentioned how, by the power of God's Tapas, Being started manifesting itself out of the Unmanifested at the time of creation. This is referred to here.

2. The desire to create the universe arose in the Supreme Self. Creation in Indian thought means the re-production or projection of last kalpa's existence which had remained dormant during the great dissolution (Pralaya).

3. Desire (kama) is the seed of the mind. If all desires are destroyed, the mind would cease to exist. Sayana however separates 'desire' from 'seed of mind' and takes mind in the plural. According to him the whole line means: "When the seeds of karma of all living beings of the previous kalpa ripened in their minds which were lying latent in the Unmanifested, the desire to create the universe arose in the Supreme Lord who is the giver of the fruits of action." So he takes retas as the seed of karma. 'Seed of mind' belongs to living beings where 'desire' belongs to God.

4. Seeking here means seeking through meditation.

For Manisha, see Kath. Up. 6-9 and Ai. Up. 5-2.

5. Prof. Kunhen Raja who sees the origins of Samkhya philosophy in this hymn says: "It is said that in the beginning there was darkness encompassed by darkness. That is the Tamo Guna or the material aspect of the basic fundamental of the universe. Then there is the life, which is called the breathing without breath (anidavatam), the power within. That is Sattva Guna or Light or Sentient aspect. Then the Tapas is the Rajo Guna, the activity. On account of these aspects, there was the Will (kama) which corresponds to the Buddhi. This primal feature is the seed for the activity of what is known as the Antah-karana, that is the Manas." (Poet Philosophers of Rig Veda, p. 227).

ततरश्चीनो ववततो रस्श्रिषिाधः स्मवदासी३दुपुरर स्मवदासी३त् ॒।

रेतोधा आसन् ॒ि॑हिान आसन्मवधा अवमतात् ॒

रयततः परमतात् ॒॥५॥

Tirascheeno vitato rashmireshaamadhah

svidaasee dupari svidaaseet,

Retodhaa aasan mahimaana aasantsvadhaa

avastaat prayatih parastaat. (5)

[The meaning of this fifth stanza is obscure and the translation given here is based on several collated interpretations.]

5. The rays of these (1) spread out (vitatah) across (tirascinah) above and below (2). There were bearers of seed (retodha) and great things (mahimanah) (3), there was power (svadha) below and impulse (prayatih) above (4).

1. 'Esham of these,' evidently refers to something in the previous stanza, but what it is, is not clear. Griffith suggests that an intervening stanza may, perhaps, have been lost.

AccordingtoSayana'these'referstothecreatedworlds.'
'Rays'heinterpretsas'likerays.'Macdonellbelieves'rasmih'
means'cord,'the'bandhu'mentionedinthepreviousstanza and
hequotesRigveda7-25-18insupportofthis.

2. AccordingtoSayana,creationwassosuddenlikeaflashof
lightningthatthoughtheworldswereactuallycreatedoneafter
another(asmentionedintheTai.Up.2-1-1)theyspreadout
rapidlylikearayoflightanditwasthereforedifficulttosay
which one was above and which one below.

3. AccordingtoSayana,'retah-adhah''bearerofseed'means
living beings, the enjoyer (bhokta), and 'mahimanah' the non-
livingobjectsmeanttobeenjoyed(bhogya).Macdonellthinks
'retodha'(impregnators)andMahimanah(powers)referto
male and female cosmogonic principles.

4. Sayanainterprets'svadha'as'food'and'prayatih'as'the
eateroffood,'thetotalmeaningbeing'theobjectiveworldwas
created after the subjective world,'

Sayana'sinterpretationofthestanza,basedonlaterVedantic
thought,isclearbutunconvincing,whereastheinterpretation
offeredbyMacdonell,GriffithandotherWesternscholarscan
only bedescribedasignotumperignotius.

को अद्धा वेद क इ॒ह वोचत् कु ल॒आजाता कु त इयं ववसृसू ष्टः ।

अवाग्दयदेवाअमयववसजनेयनोऽथाकोवेदयतआबभूव॥६॥

Ko addhaavedakaehapravocatkuta

aajaataa kutaeyamvisrushtih,

Arvaagdevaa asya visarjanenaa athaa

onko veda yataaababhoova.(6)

इयंववसृसूष्टयतयआबभूवूयहदवादधेयहदवान।

यो अमयाय्ःपरिव्योन्सोअङ्गवैदयहदवानवेदे॥७॥

Eyam visrushtiryata aababhoova yadi va dadhe yadi vaa na, Yo asyaadyakshah parame vyomantso anga vaida yadi vaa na veda. (7) 6.Whoreallyknows? Whocantell,whencethisoriginatedand whence(1)thiscreation?Thegodscameafterthiscreation (2); therefore who knows whence it arose.

7.Thatfromwhichthiscreationarose-doesitsupportitor doesnot(3)?Hewhoisthesuperintendent(4)inthehighest heaven, He certainly knows or perhaps he knows net (5).

1.AccordingtoSayana,thefirst'whence'referstoupadana karana,materialcause,andthesecond'whence'refersto nimitta karana, instrumental (or personal) cause.

2.Accordingtooneschoolofthoughtallgodsareonlypartsof the Virat, the manifested universe.

Thegodsreferredtoherearethepresidingdeitiesofdifferent organs, celestial spheres, etc., and not the Supreme Deity.

3.Thequestioniswhetherthecreateduniversegotseparated fromthecreator(asaneggfromahen)orwhetherGod remainedimmanentincreation.Itisansweredinthefamous passage 'tat srshtva tadevanupravisat' in the Tai. Up. 2-6-1.

4. Adhyaksha, the overseer, the eternal witness.

5.HeknowsnotbecauseHeisknowledgeitself.Knowing impliesobjectification,butthereisnothingapartfromGodand soHecannotbesaidto'know'intheordinarysense.Sayana's interpretationis:"IfHedoesnotknownobodyelsedoes." Somescholarsseeintheselinessignsofatheismandthe

germs of Samkhya philosophy but this is an unwarranted assumption which Sayana himself repudiates.

NASADIYA SUKTAM

(H.H. Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj)

Then there was no non-existence nor existence. There was no earth, there was no sky. What was there? It was a vast expanse of deep waters profound and tremendous. There was no death, there was no immortality. There was no night and there was no day. That alone was there breathing within itself. Nothing there was outside It or external to It.

(ne It was all a kind of darkness, as it were, enveloping everything at that time-all waters of cosmic universality. There was intense Tapas and high concentration of Consciousness at that time. In that, arose the central desire of the Cosmic Being, the origin of what we call mind, the thinking principle. The great sages discovered in this condition, existence which is commensurate with this condition of non-existence. It was the heart of all beings. It was radiating light from all sides. It was indeed darkness due to excess of light, because there was no one to behold that light.

No one can know how this creation came, because even the gods came after creation. Who can know then, the origin of creation? Oh! What a wonder! How did this world come at all? How this creation? Only the One who created this universe will know how it came. Perhaps, He, too, does not know.

Harih Om Tat Sat

SANTI MANTRA

Brhadaranyaka Upanishad-V-I

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते।

पूणमयय पूणिूयादाय पूणिेयवावसशष्यते ॥

ॐशान्तः शान्तः शान्तः॥

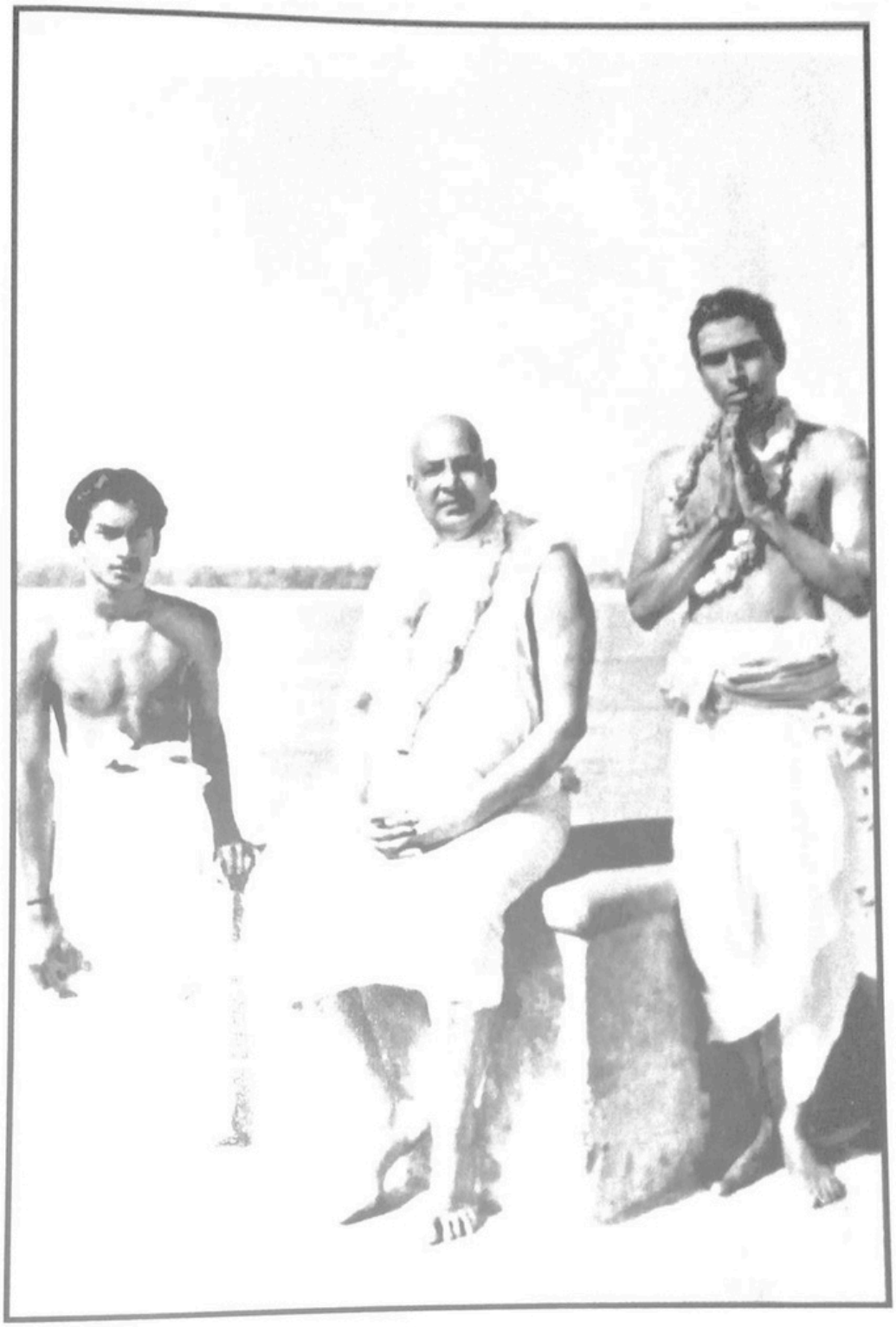
OmPurnam-adahpunrnam-idampurnat purnam-udachyate,

Purnasya purnam-adaya purnam-eva'vasishyate.

Om Santih! Santih! Santih!

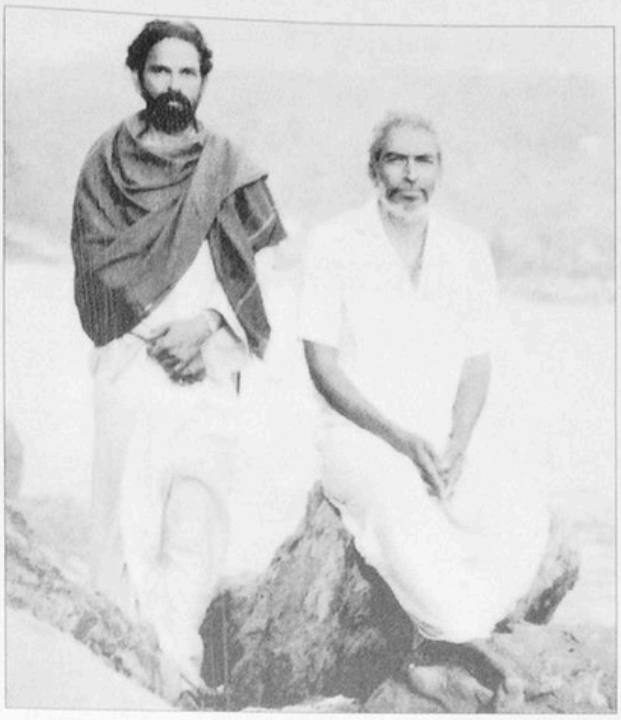
Om. That (supreme Brahman) is infinite, and this (conditioned Brahman) is infinite. The infinite (conditioned Brahman) proceeds from the infinite (supreme Brahman). then through knowledge), taking the infinite (conditioned Brahman) from the infinite (supreme Brahman). It remains as the infinite (supreme Brahman) alone. Om! Peace! Peace! Peace!

HARI OMTAT SAT

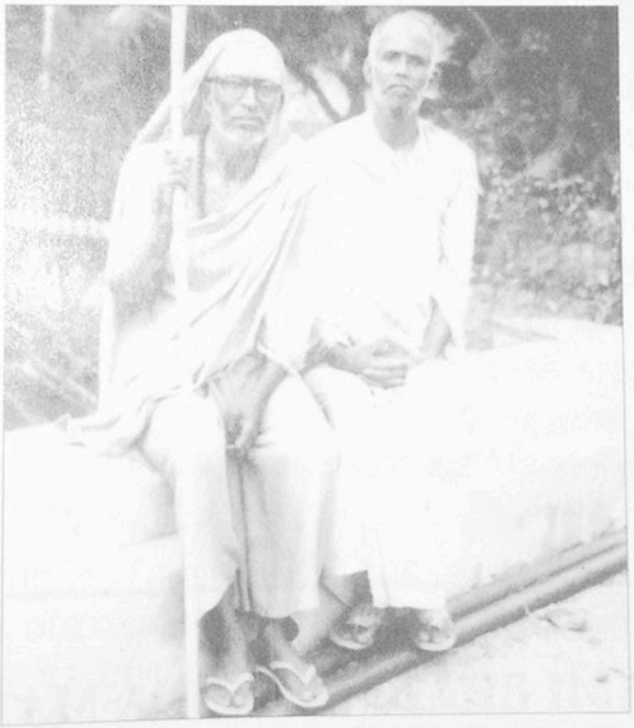


Sri. K. Nilakanta Iyer & his son
with Gurudev Sri Swami Sivananda

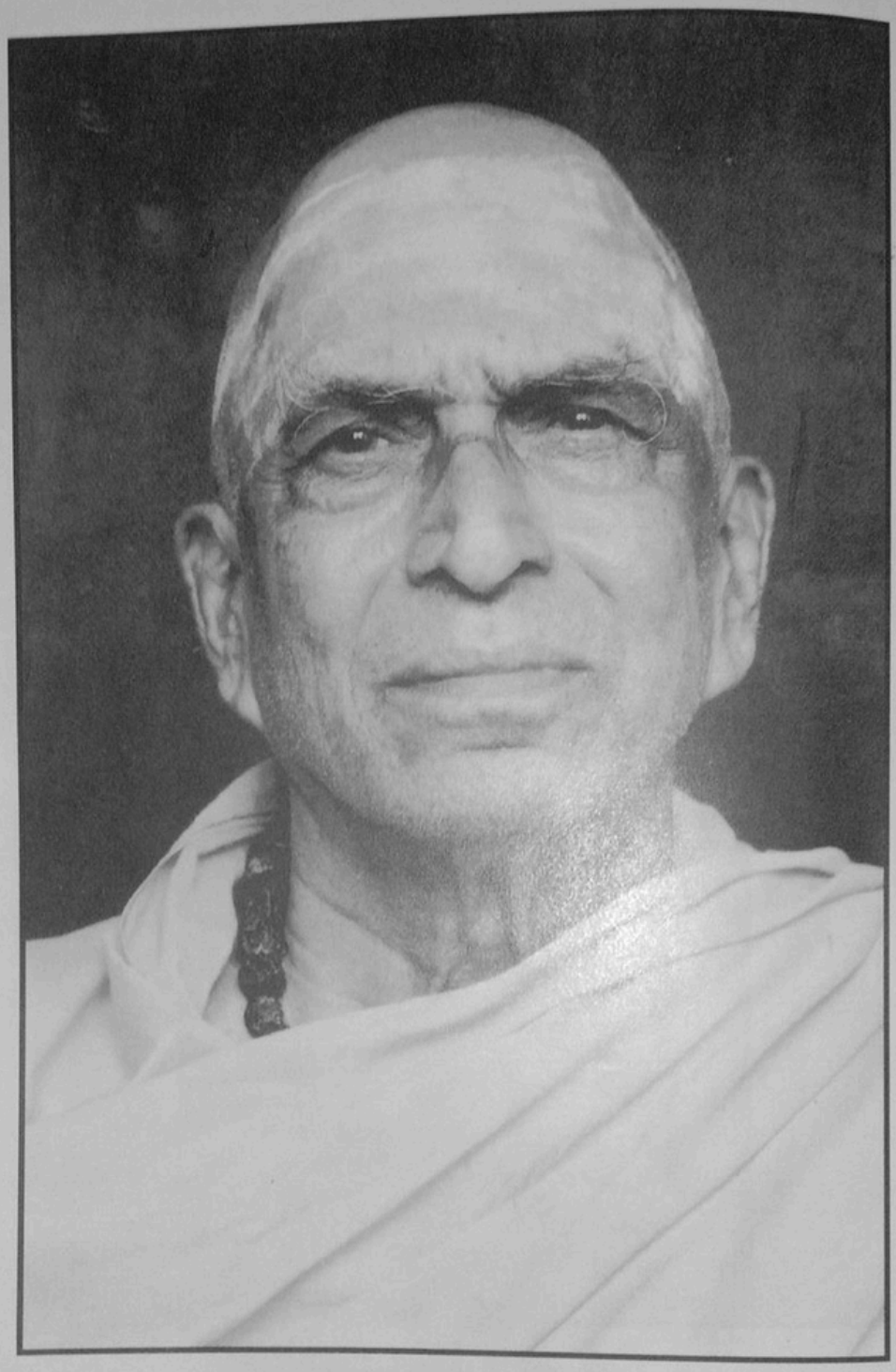
SRI SWAMI BRAHMANANDA AT SIVANANDA ASHRAM



Nilakanta Iyer Seated near Ganges bank



Swami Brahmananda in Kanya Kumari



SRI SWAMI BRAHMANANDA MAHARAJ

H.H. SRI SWAMI BRAHMANANDAJI MAHARAJ

(A Life-Sketch)

"That rare person who attains success in meditation is really a blessed one. None can describe his nature fully. People who try to describe a sage can be broadly brought under three groups. Many describe his body and its activities. They speak about his parents, his birth, his childhood, his school education, and so on. Some others describe the sage's charitable nature, his love towards others, his instructions to his disciples, his equal vision, etc. Only very few, maybe one in a million, describe the sage rightly through statements like 'I am He' and 'He is I'. Only those who have themselves realized the Truth can boldly assert their identity with the sage, because they have directly experienced the truth of the Vedic declarations neti, neti (not this, not this) and sarvam khalvidam brahma (All this is verily non-dual Consciousness, pure and infinite). That the first two groups of people who think that they are giving beautiful, long and eloquent descriptions of the sage are far from right, needs no special mention."* Nevertheless, we who belong to the first two groups cannot do otherwise than make the traditional attempt to recount the life story of a great soul, who was our teacher.

Thiruchendur in Tamil Nadu has one of the six famous temples of Lord Subrahmanya. A community of dedicated devotees of the Lord live there. One such

*Supreme Knowledge-2nd Edition Page No. 356 H.H. Sri swami Brahmanandaji Maharaj.

Brahmin family migrated a few generations back to Tiruvanantapuram, Kerala State. On 26th June, 1910,

Revered Swami Brahmananda Maharaj was born into that family, to the pious parents Sri Krishna Iyer and Srimati Padmini Ammal, in the village Thonnakkal, near Tiruvanantapuram (Trivandrum). He was the eldest of five children. His parents named him Nilakantan.

His studies commenced in Tiruvanantapuram. After graduating from Travancore University (now Kerala University), he joined the services of the then princely state of Travancore. He was married and in the year 1932, a son was born, who was named Sundarakrishnan. Twelve years later, in 1944, his wife passed away and Nilakanta Iyer assumed full responsibility for the upbringing of the boy. Though pressed by his parents to remarry, he steadfastly declined. The premature death of his wife appears to have wrought some changes in his life for, around this time, he went on a pilgrimage to Ramanashram in Tiruvannamalai where he was blessed with the darshan of the great sage of Arunachala, Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. He spent a day in the Ashram.

Shortly after this, sometime in 1946, he happened to be browsing through the bookstall in Tiruvanantapuram Railway Station, where he happened upon the newly published Practice of Yoga-Volume I by H. H. Gurudev Sri Swami Sivananda Maharaj. So inspired was he by the book and the author that, during the same year, he journeyed to the foothills of the distant Himalayas for darshan of the Holy Master. Gurudev blessed him with Mantra Diksha during that visit. From that time onwards, he visited the Ashram once every year, with the exception of 1950 when Gurudev made his All-India Tour.

In 1947, he sought Gurudev's permission to join the Ashram and give up hearth and home. At that time, his son was only fifteen years. Gurudev made some inquiries and asked him

how much longer he would have to continue in service so as to be eligible for pension benefits. Nilakanta Iyer replied, "ten years more". Then Gurudev advised him to continue in service until the time when pension eligibility was secured. Never, at that time, could Nilakanta Iyer have imagined that his pension benefits would hold him in good stead after retirement for almost fifty years!

So, inspired was he by Gurudev Sri Swami Sivananda Maharaj and his divine mission that as early as 1947 Nilakanta Iyer organised a branch of the Divine Life Society, in his own home in Tiruvanantapuram. Inauguration ceremonies were conducted on January 26, 1947, with Revered Sri Swami Tapasyanandaji Maharaj of the Ramakrishna Mission officiating. Nilakanta Iyer served as Secretary. In addition to the bi-weekly meetings, all special holy days as well as, Sivananda Ashram special anniversaries were celebrated with much sincerity and devotion. Gurudev's Diamond Jubilee in 1947, was honoured by a grand two-day celebration and a crowded program of puja, of puja, akhanda mahajapa, inauguration of yoga classes, mantra writings, public meetings and prayers for the long life of Sri Swamiji Maharaj. Periodically, the branch printed small tracts containing Gurudev's teachings and sent them to the Ashram for distribution as jnana prasad. The branch library was also located in his home and served as a distribution point for Gurudev's books and teachings.

In 1950, Gurudev set out on his All-India and Ceylon Tour. Nilakanta Iyer was appointed to organise Gurudev's programme in the Tiruvanantapuram circle. His father, also, was a member of the Tour Organising Committee. Gurudev blessed their home with his sublime presence and performed arati in their puja room to the great satisfaction of the entire family.

In 1951, Nilakanta Iyer along with his son, Sundarakrishnan, and one or two friends set out on a pilgrimage with the intention of visiting the famous temples in the South as well as in North India. Their yatra in the South completed, they arrived at the Ashram with plans to set out for the holy mountain shrines of Kedarnath and Badrinath after a few days. For the son, who was not yet twenty years old, this was his first visit to Sivananda Ashram. As a modern young scholar, he was having some doubts concerning the efficacy and value of the spiritual life and, with only a half-hearted interest, he made salutations to Revered Gurudev. After visiting the Ashram for a few days, they commenced their journey accompanied by one Swami Sadananda and two other persons, who were residents of the Ashram. Thus, a group of five persons started their pilgrimage to Kedarnath.

While the group was returning from Kedarnath by foot, Sundarakrishnan happened to step on a sharp thorn which lodged itself in his left heal. Within a day or two, walking became very troublesome for him. At times, he covered the distance atop a pony. Nevertheless, by the time the group reached Srinagar on their way to Badrinath, his condition had become serious. Nilakanta Iyer consulted a doctor there for treatment, but the doctor found the wound very seriously infected and advised them to return to Sivananda Ashram Hospital in Rishikesh and take treatment from Dr. Rai immediately. Requesting the rest of the group to complete their Badrinath Yatra, father and son returned to the Ashram.

In the Ashram Hospital, the wound was treated, but the heel turned black, discharging fluids and causing excruciating pain. During the dressing of the wound, the boy cried aloud because of the severe pain. This drew Gurudev's attention. Gurudev came to see the boy and instructed the medical assistants to do the dressing gently. As the condition of the leg deteriorated

further, the doctors decided to perform amputation of the foot in a hospital in Dehra Dun and scheduled the surgery to occur after two days. But on the second day, the doctor noticed what appeared to be a miraculous improvement and announced, to the immense joy of all, that amputation would not be necessary because somehow the wound was almost 90% healed! "What could have happened?" Nilakanta Iyer asked his son.

Only then did the boy narrate the whole story. Two days before during his regular afternoon visits to the various departments of the Ashram, Gurudev Sri Swami Sivananda had come to his room at about 1:30 p.m. accompanied by Swami Venkatesananda and a few other Ashram swamis,. Gurudev asked Sundarakrishnan to remove the bandage. Then Gurudev chanted thrice the Mrityunjaya Mantra, followed by a triple recitation of the Mahamantra (Hare Rama Hare Rama...). Then, in a very loud voice, the Holy Master intoned 'OM' thrice. The boy was told to replace the bandage, and Gurudev departed. When Nilakanta Iyer heard this, he told his son in a serious tone about the procedure the doctors had been planning and that it was due to the grace of Gurudev only that the wound had begun to heal. Earlier, the boy did not have faith and regard for Gurudev, and Nilakanta Iyer pointed out this defect.

For about a month, they continued their stay in the Ashram until the boy was able to walk normally. When the day came for their departure to Tiruvanantapuram, both father and son went for Gurudev's darshan and blessing. With full faith and love and gratitude, the boy fell at the feet of Gurudev in full prostration. Gurudev took this occasion to impart final instructions to the boy. Gurudev told him that, after some years had passed, his father wanted to come and join the Ashram, and that the boy should not raise any objections. Rather, the

boy should happily and willingly allow the father to depart in peace.

Over the next six years, Nilakanta Iyer continued to visit the Ashram annually. During one of these visits, Gurudev Sri Swami Sivananda bestowed upon him the gerua cloth, insignia of the holy order of Sannyasa, as well as the sacred Sannyasa Mantras. He even bestowed upon him the monastic name Swami Brahmananda Saraswati. But as he was still in government service and involved in family obligations, the viraja homa (sacred fire ceremony) was not performed at that time. Gurudev advised him to make special study of the Upanishads and, as final instructions, "Brahmananda Swami, live here! Where else can you find the holy Himalaya and Ganga!"

As advised by Gurudev, Nilakanta Iyer remained in government service until 1957. On October 10, 1957, he took voluntary retirement from service. At that time, he was serving as a Class-1 Officer (a high rank), as Superintendent of the Kerala Government Press, Tiruvanantapuram. Forty years later, when asked by a student, what had been his work prior to Sannyasa, Swamiji replied simply, "a clerk in a government press"

and changed the subject. To his students and colleagues, barely anything was known about his early life.

When his son was married in 1958, Nilakanta Iyer shifted to Rishikesh. Being the eldest son, he still had to discharge some duties towards his parents and also had some responsibilities remaining concerning his only son. So, he divided his time between Rishikesh and Tiruvanantapuram. He used to spend eight or nine months in Rishikesh and three or four months in Tiruvanantapuram. During the early years of his life at Rishikesh, he lived at Ramnagar. Later he shifted to Muni-ki-

reti along with some fellow disciples and lived in a thatched hut in the Ram Ashram premises. He also stayed for a while near the Ashram at Hanuman Mandir on the banks of the Ganga. During this period (1958-1963), Nilakanta Iyer offered some seva in various departments of the Ashram.

In those days, sometimes, Gurudev used to send biscuit packets to the sadhaks who were serving in various departments. On one occasion, after receiving biscuit packets, Nilakanta Iyer and some other inmates went to Gurudev to explain that they were concerned that the cost of the packets was too much for the Ashram to bear as the Ashram was facing serious financial constraints at that time. Gurudev replied, "I know everything. You don't worry about this!" Such was the love and compassion that Sri Gurudev had for the inmates and devotees.

Gurudev shed his mortal coil in July, 1963. At that time, Nilakanta Iyer was in Tiruvanantapuram attending to his old father, who was sick and bed-ridden due to dislocation of the hip joints. Hearing the news on the radio, he started making preparations to leave for Rishikesh. But the family astrologer advised him to remain in Tiruvanantapuram itself, as the end of his own father was fast approaching. With a heavy heart, he remained there. As predicted, in August, 1963, his father passed away, and Nilakantan performed the last rites for his father according to custom.

Around this time, Sringeri Sankaracharya, H.H. Sri Abhinava Vidya Theertha visited Tiruvanantapuram. A sect of the local Brahmin community, including Nilakanta Iyer, went for the darshan of His Holiness. The Acharyaji advised them to worship Lord Subrahmanya. During a subsequent discussion of this advice by the group, Nilakanta Iyer suggested that the Acharya's injunction could be carried out best by building a

temple for the Lord and doing regular worship there. This idea was readily accepted by the community and a committee was formed. Nilakanta Iyer was entrusted by the entire community with the responsibility of constructing the temple as Convener. The temple was constructed in accordance with the Pancharatra Agama and the consecration ceremony was performed in June, 1964. A few weeks after this, Nilakanta Iyer returned to Rishikesh.

After this, he made Occasional visits to Tiruvanantapuram for one particular reason: no child had been born to his son. Finally, in 1966, Nilakanta Iyer consulted the family astrologer and accordingly arranged for the propitiating ceremony of some departed soul in their lineage. Then, in 1967, a female child was born. In 1968, Nilakanta Iyer attended the first year birthday celebrations of his grandchild. Then, with a sense of completion of all his responsibilities towards earthly relations, Nilakanta Iyer retired to Rishikesh permanently.

According to his horoscope, the year 1968 presaged a very critical period in which death from illness was a possibility. Not knowing what the future would hold in store, he became anxious to complete as quickly as possible the formal viraja homa ceremony that had not been performed, when he had received the Sannyasa Mantras, gerua cloth and monastic name from worshipful Sri Gurudev, Sri Swami Sivananda years earlier. Since H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj, President of the Divine Life Society, was away on foreign tour, Nilakanta Iyer approached the General Secretary, H. H. Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj and requested completion of the Sannyasa Disksha. Thus, on the Holy Guru Purnima Day in July, 1968, the holy viraja homa ceremony was performed and, assuming the monastic name given him by Gurudev, Swami Brahmananda Saraswati donned the gerua cloth and embraced the Holy Order of Sannyasa.

Prior to this time, he had been staying in a room in Hanuman Mandir just in front of the Ashram. After Sannyas, Swamiji shifted to room No. 23, Vaikuntha Dham in the Ashram, a room he was to occupy for the next 30 years! In such high regard did Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj hold Swami Brahmananda that, after the Sannyasa ceremony, he offered Swami Brahmananda a desk in his own office, and requested Swamiji to assist him in his office work. But Swami Brahmananda politely declined, humbly replying that he would prefer to do some seva while remaining in his own room.

Swamiji was a member of a study group in the Ashram which met daily, at fixed hours, and went through various scriptures. The members of this group knew Tamil, Malayalam, English, and some Sanskrit and Hindi. Scriptures like the Brahma Sutras, Upanishads, and Bhagavad Gita were studied by comparing the commentaries written in the various languages. The pace was quite unhurried and the grasp was thorough. It took one and half years to study the first six chapters of the Bhagavad Gita. After lunch, they would take a little rest and, around 1:00 p.m., they would commence the study. Even on occasions where rest was not possible, Swamiji's dedication, attendance, and punctuality was 100%. In addition to this, Swamiji attended the early morning prayer meeting of Swami Vidyananda for about ten years. The prayer session would commence at 3:30 a.m. with recitation of selected mantras from each Upanishad and also some chapters of the Bhagavad Gita accompanied by the melodious sounds of veena and tambura. In a week's time, they covered selections from all the twelve major Upanishads and the entire Bhagavad Gita.

Some time in the year 1978 or 1979, prompted by a neighbour, who was a resident sadhak, Swamiji started reading and discussing Vedantic text in his room with a few resident sadhaks. Gradually, this took the form of a class which was

attended by a number of inmates, guests and visitors. Three regular classes were conducted: one in the morning, the second in the afternoon, and the third in the evening, each lasting for about forty-five minutes. For years and years, the classes were held in Swamiji's little room until the number of students swelled to overflowing, and then the classes were shifted to a nearby hall.

Swamiji covered all the traditional texts and included modern authors as well; the Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Ashtavakra Gita, Yoga Vasistha, Tripura Rahasya, Amritanubhava, Bhakti Sutras, Atma Bodha, Vivekachudamani, Pancadasi, Adhyatma Ramayana, Selections from the Bhagavatam Ramayanam, Talks with Ramana Maharshi, Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, I am That by Nisargadatta Maharaj, Consciousness Speaks by Ramesh Balsekar, and Heart of a Gopi, to name just a few. The Yoga Vasistha was perhaps Swamiji's favourite text. Once Swamiji taught it four times continuously for about six years, reading the entire two volumes of Swami Venkatesananda's translation which is entitled "The Supreme Yoga", sentence by sentence.

In addition, Swamiji used to take Vedanta classes for the students of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy and also gave special classes on Vedanta to groups of foreign visitors and guests, who frequented the Ashram. Except for short periods in 1984 and 1991, Swamiji conducted his formal classes regularly until December 1995. After that, due to weakened health, the formal classes were stopped. But the students kept coming and small, informal sessions continued to be held in Swamiji's room up to almost the very end of his life.

In his classes, Swamiji never lectured. His method was to read the text and explain whatever it was with the Vedantic touch. Differences in words and concepts never restrained him from

pointing towards the 'Absolute'. Swamiji would unfold continuously and effortlessly 'That' which is beyond all words and thoughts. With absolute conviction and unending patience, he would urge his listeners to constantly and deeply reflect over their own daily experience of deep sleep, dream, and waking states.

"You must clearly know, who the 'I' in you is, that is the first step. You presume there is an 'I', and you think that 'I' is the body and mind, which it is not. If you go on thinking 'I am the body and the mind', none of these teachings will enter the heart, and there will be no progress on the spiritual path. You are not this body-mind. This body-mind exists only during the waking state. There are two other states of consciousness, which we experience everyday. In the dream state, you have another body and mind. And in the deep sleep state, you are without the body and mind. Why don't you pay attention to those two states? They constitute the major portion of your life, two-thirds of your life. If you take into consideration only one-third of life, only the waking state, how do you expect to solve the problems involving the whole of life? If you analyse the deep sleep state and the dream state, you will never say 'I am this body'. This body exists during only one of the three states. We are trying to know that 'I' which identifies itself with this body in the waking state, which identifies itself with another body in the dream state, and which has no body in the deep sleep state. This 'I', who had no body in the deep sleep state, dreamt as a butterfly in my dream and as a human being now. Which is the truth?"

Thus, Swamiji would drive home the 'truths' clearly, even to those sadhaks not having a Hindu religious background. He loved questions and always encouraged students to clear all doubts. His pet response to any overly-interrogative student was a beautiful smile and the advice, "Do you really want to

know God? You must really want it. Argument has its limit. What is needed now is reflection, deep reflection. Reflect over it. Think about it. Bring to your mind, what the scriptures and the Masters are saying. So many pages are there, but what they say is really not very much; it is really very little. What is that 'very little', the essence of all this? You must come to your own conclusion. It must be your conclusion, not a piece of borrowed information from a book or from others. I Am that, I Am, that great declaration, "Aham Brahmasmi."

Bring that to the intellect or mind again and again. In the course of time, that thought itself will dissolve. It is a mystery. Try it. Have faith in the Masters and the scriptures. This is the ultimate sadhana." Over the decades, hundreds of students have benefited from these classes.

A beautiful tribute was written about Swamiji in the year 2000 by a devotee: "His Holiness Sri Swami Brahmananda Maharaj is a senior monk of the Sivananda Ashram, Rishikesh, whose towering spiritual insights have sparked the flame of aspiration in the hearts of countless students from around the world. Swami Brahmananda radiates a peace so palpable that, it touches a wellspring of joy in the hearts of sincere aspirants. Swami Brahmananda speaks from a depth of understanding which empowers his words to cut through the veil of ignorance. His wisdom, which is not from the intellect but from the very Source of Truth, is shared with tremendous patience and love."

Swamiji wrote articles for the 'Divine Life', the monthly journal of the Society, and at times did proofreading for the journal and important books of the press. His first work, The Philosophy of Sage Yajnavalkya, was serialised in the Divine Life magazine and later published in book form in the year 1972. The second book, Revelation of the Ever Revealed, (Sage Totakacharya's Sruti-sara-samuddharanam) was released in 1978. A booklet,

Brahmasutras-A Remembrancer, was published in 1984. Then another booklet, Quintessence of Spiritual Practice (Acharya Sankara's Sadhana Pancakam), was printed. In addition to these works, Swamiji edited Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji's Brihadaranyaka Upanishad from incomplete manuscripts. This was first published in the year 1985. Also, he edited some works by H.H. Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj and H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj.

The last book, his magnum opus, Supreme Knowledge-Revealed through Vidyas in the Upanishads, was first serialised in the magazines 'Divine Life' and 'Wisdom Light' from 1984-1989, and then printed in book form in 1990 with some valuable additions. A second edition was published in 2000. Just a few months before his demise, Swamiji was surprised and pleased to receive a copy of a magazine review of The Supreme Knowledge. It was a full page book review written by Sri Ajit Telang in the magazine DILIP. Mr. Telang wrote: "His Holiness Swami Brahmanandaji Maharaj has done a remarkable service to the readers of spiritual books by coming out with this book. The author has provided unique spiritual insights from the Upanishads that are valuable tools to the seekers of the eternal truth-Brahman....Swamiji explains the ideas of the Upanishads and their relevance in today's life so well that the book can practically become a text book for any spiritual aspirant, who wants... to make progress on the spiritual path."

Through the pages of his writing, Swamiji has unveiled many enigmatic scriptural statements by explaining the esoteric significance and the hidden meaning of the text beyond and above etymological and common meaning. As he often said, "You must read behind the words and between the lines when studying the scriptures. Do not take them literally. There is

something hidden there." Undoubtedly, he has put forth his visions and contemplations in these pages.

Towards the end of 1998, two video cassettes were released containing recordings of eight classes taught by Swamiji on the Karika to the Mandukya Upanishad. These were the last formal classes taught by Swamiji prior to his stroke in December 1995. Also released were five audio cassettes containing the first ten classes of a one hundred-ninety-eight class series by Swamiji on St. Jnaneshwar's Amritanubhava (Experience of Immortality).

Generally, throughout his life, Swamiji enjoyed very good health. Naturally, he was endowed with a strong physique. Meticulously, he observed physical cleanliness. In his younger days, he would bathe daily in the Ganga and take long walks. The walking continued up to his final years. His daily routine and his dietary regime were both impeccably adhered to. He observed moderation in all matters, especially food habits. For more than half a century, he took only one tablespoon of rice with his lunch, which otherwise included a small amount of vegetable, dahl or sambar, perhaps a chapati and some curd. Dinner was the same every evening: kitcherie and a little dahl. On rare occasions, Swamiji himself would prepare dosa in his room, mixing the batter in his single small catori and cooking it on a well-tempered cast iron skillet. Because of these simple food habits, he never experienced indigestion or headache or the other symptoms associated with poor digestion. Once an Army Medical Officer from Dehra Dun visited the Ashram. He also came to see Swamiji. He made a general check-up of Swamiji and finally made the remark, "Today, for the first time, I am seeing a young man of eighty years!"

Swamiji was gentle, unassuming and respectful. He had a naturally serene personality. He was soft-spoken, patient, calm

and kind to everyone and everything. Whatever he touched, he touched with gentleness. One could never hear even his foot-steps. If any new thing was brought into his presence, Swamiji evinced a childlike curiosity and delight in delving into its workings and mechanisms. Whenever he used to walk though the Ashram premises, he would observe the new construction and would ask details about it. He was extremely observant about everything that was happening, extremely aware. Swamiji displayed love, care and concern regarding the welfare of sadhaks whom he knew. If those known to him were absent for more than a few days, Swamiji would send someone to get news of them. If someone were ill or injured, Swamiji himself would go to his bedside and make sure he was receiving the proper care.

Once, one resident-sadhak started playing badminton with some other sadhaks. Although Swamiji advised him not to play, he did not heed Swamiji's advice. Within a few days, he sustained a fracture of one of his legs and was confined to his room for three months. Swamiji said nothing, but instead, would climb two flights of stairs to visit him in his room. On another occasion, two close devotees of Swamiji accompanied him on his evening walk. While Swamiji was sitting on the Ganges bank, the two devotees (against Swamiji's wishes) started swimming and sporting in the water. The tide was high and the current swift. Swamiji called them back repeatedly, but they were not listening. Suddenly two policemen appeared, compelled the two swimmers to return to the bank, and gave them a sound scolding. Swamiji just smiled at them. Even if it were a matter of egregious conduct on the part of one of the sadhaks, Swamiji never rebuked him to his face nor spoke against him to others. He was a paragon of equal-vision, acceptance and compassion.

Swamiji led a simple life. One could not find expensive or luxury items in his room. He lived with minimum comforts. Once, in the summer season, a Brahmachari from the Reception Office brought an air-cooler to Swamiji's room. Swamiji smiled and allowed him to turn it on. The Brahmachari returned with the satisfaction of having given some relief from the summer heat to the aged body of Swamiji. The next morning, as a first duty, Swamiji phoned the Brahmachari and lovingly asked him to take back the cooler as he did not need it. Swamiji was also very considerate regarding his elderly Swami neighbours. Because Swamiji was conducting classes, many students would come to see him for consultation and might also present him with various items like biscuits, etc. Swamiji always shared these items with his neighbours. And, when sitting outside on the verandah with his neighbours, he made it a point to include them in conversations with students.

For almost thirty years, Swamiji lived in a modest room located on the ground floor of the men's quarters behind the Viswanath Mandir. It was approximately eight foot square, with an area two feet by six feet sectioned off as a bath-toilet. There were two small windows. Ventilation was poor. There was no closet. Clothing was neatly folded and hung over wire clothes-lines placed along the wall. Swamiji had a small metal bookshelf, the top of which served as his altar. On this he had placed the sacred photograph of Gurudev Sri Swami Sivananda, which was flanked on either side by a small brass vase filled with red flowers. In the centre was the ghee lamp, a holder for incense, and a few other articles for daily worship. Below this, on the first shelf of the book-rack, Swamiji placed some articles of personal use: his fountain pen, a pen knife, some toothpicks, a note-pad, Everything was kept in the right place, its exact place, and it was a place of maximum utility. One could not find a better location than Swamiji's choice. Swamiji used to light

the ghee lamp and incense both in the morning and evening. In the morning after lighting the camphor, he used to chant Guru-stotras and Para-puja slokas. He always took care that the best quality ghee was used in the lamp, and that it was lighted at the proper time.

There were really very few articles in Swamiji's room. In the old days, there used to be a small painting depicting the Rasa Lila. It showed the Gopis of Brindavan in circular formation, and between each pair of Gopis, there stood Sri Krishna. While explaining Gopika Geetam and Heart of a Gopi, Swamiji used to refer to this painting as a means of driving home various Advaitic truths. Sometime later, someone presented Swamiji with a calendar containing a large portrait of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. Swamiji showed great reverence towards it and kept it on a wall opposite his bed until the end.

Swamiji scrupulously observed purity, dispassion and aspiration, the marks of the sacred Sannyasa Ashrama. He used to instruct his students: "If one lives a pure life according to his station in life, liberation will be waiting for him at the end." Swamiji maintained serenity always and was always at peace with everything. He never complained about anyone or anything, since he did not see anything other to himself. Many students and sadhaks came to him seeking his advice. Whether the problem concerned secular, social or spiritual matters, Swamiji would not rest until he had elevated the conversation to include a glimpse into the presence of Reality, the highest Truth. Often, like Sri Bhagavan Ramana before him, he would answer a question with another question, saying: "Who is it, who wants to know?" "First find out, who you are; then all problems will dissolve by themselves." "How could the perfect God have created an imperfect world?" As one disciple later reminisced, "One could hear just one echo: 'Everything is quite all right here, even now. There is nothing

to be done to the perfect world. Say 'yes' to everything. Swim with the current. Do not resist. Accept everything as Bhagavan's prasad. No question will then arise in your mind."

Once Swamiji was asked to give some written suggestions regarding the welfare of the Ashram. Swamiji expressed his thoughts lucidly in the following manner:

"Let each one of us know for certain that Spiritual Peace and Happiness alone can contribute to the welfare of the Ashram, and that it is purely subjective.

"Our scriptures and Masters have been proclaiming with up-raised hands at the top of their voice about the immanence of God, the Absolute, the Supreme, in every atom and sub-atom of His so-called creation - in all 'beings' and 'becomings' (doings). Let the 'I' apperceive this simple saving Truth. This is the only sure and unfailing means for the welfare of the Ashram as a whole. The wonder of wonders is that the apperception of this Truth ensures simultaneously the welfare of the whole world also. When one, even once, gets a glimpse, as it were, of this Truth (the great Reality which the Scriptures say, for reasons obvious, is sacred and also secret), one experiences Peace, that Peace which is not conditioned or limited by space, time and causation - that Peace which is beyond understanding. This alone can ensure the permanent welfare of the Ashram.

"Now, if this matter is considered from, what we call the pragmatic view, we may have a number of suggestions for the welfare of the Ashram. These suggestions are bound to be as many as there are modifications of the mind of the persons offering the suggestions. And the process of giving effect to all the suggestions or even some of them will be endless. And perhaps the results may not be worth the trouble. It may even be like the proverbial attempt to catch one's own shadow. Even

if the mind says that we have succeeded, it does not require much time for the mind to think of fresh and better suggestions. This endless process will continue till one realises subjectively that the 'present' state of things is the best for the present. And we all know that the phenomenon of this world (which includes the Ashram) is an ever changing process. There will be a cessation of it only when one realises subjectively that this so- called phenomenon is itself "really" the Absolute, the Perfection, the Eternal, the best welfare one can think of. Let us, therefore, know and realise that this phenomenon itself is an expression of the Supreme Power and hence it cannot but be Perfection, the best welfare one can think of.

"May God and Gurudev bless us with the saving wisdom."

Exactly when the onset of diabetes commenced, we do not know. But sometime in 1984, Swamiji began experiencing high blood pressure and eventually suffered a mild heart attack. He was hospitalised for a week in a Dehra Dun hospital. After a month or so, he resumed his classes despite medical advice to the contrary. When someone expressed his concern about Swamiji's health, Swamiji replied, "For a Sannyasin, svadhyaya (studying and teaching scriptures) is like the life's breath. As far as possible, one should carry on."

In September 1992, diabetes was detected. In April of the following year, Swamiji suffered a hemorrhage in the left eye. President Swamiji Maharaj, H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji, arranged for treatment to be given in Madras by Dr. Badrinath, a renowned eye-surgeon. Swamiji was sent by flight with a proper assistant. To the assistant, H.H. Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj, said, "Brahmananda Swamiji is like my father. Take proper care." For about three months after the surgery, the eye had vision. But in August of the same year, there was a second hemorrhage and eye-sight in the left eye

was lost. For a few months after this, Swamiji was unable to conduct his classes. Then, once again, the classes resumed twice a day, morning and evening. A few years later, Swamiji recalled an incident revealing Gurudev Sri Swami Sivananda's omniscience regarding this matter. Once, in the old days, Gurudev had given Swamiji (then Nilakanta Iyer) two packets of biscuits. Nilakantan kept one packet and returned the other one back to Gurudev saying, "One is sufficient." Gurudev's retort, he could not fathom at the time. For Gurudev had replied, "One is sufficient? Is one eye sufficient?"

The classes continued morning and evening for two more years. Towards the end of 1995, Swamiji was appearing very frail and exhausted; his balance was unsteady. On December 2, 1995, sometime in the afternoon, Swamiji suffered a mild stroke. He was 85 years old at that time. Subsequent to the stroke, there was a general weakening of the overall system, some impairment to the heart, a weakening of memory, loss of hearing in the right ear, and weakness in the right leg. Swamiji was able to remain in his room and was well tended by the Ashram hospital's Doctor-Swami and his colleagues. Due to their dedicated care, Swamiji's condition improved in a short time. Some special herbal medicine from France, offered by one resident French sadhak, also helped to improve Swamiji's memory and physical condition. The General Secretary, H.H. Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj, visited Swamiji in his room and lovingly compelled him to take full rest. After this, normal classes were stopped. But in a few months, devotees and seekers again began coming to Swamiji's room and for an hour in the afternoon, Swamiji used to meet with them and clear their doubts. With this small group, study of various scriptures again resumed. Now, instead of Swamiji reading the text, a reader was appointed, and the devotees tried their best not to tax Swamiji's strength too much with their questions.

Swamiji was still living in his small room in the men's quarters. Around this time, there were two or three episodes in which Swamiji suffered, what were considered attacks of asthma, which grew so severe that hospitalisation was required. But in all these incidents, a remarkable recovery was almost instantaneously effected the moment Swamiji set foot in the hospital premises. It was rapidly surmised that poor ventilation in Swamiji's little room was the silent culprit instigating these attacks, and suggestions were made to shift Swamiji to a more spacious and well-ventilated room. But each time, Swamiji declined the proposal. "Maintaining cleanliness in the room, by oneself, will be difficult in a bigger room. So, this small room is all right," was the reason Swamiji gave. Finally in 1997, after the third episode of hospitalisation and instant recovery, the Ashram Doctor insisted on shifting Swamiji, and Swamiji reluctantly agreed. And so, on January 14, 1998, the sacred Makara Sankranti Day, Swamiji shifted to a lovely, spacious and well-ventilated room in Govardhan Dham on Dattatreya Hill. Swamiji had planned that his altar photo, the sacred photo of Gurudev, would be the first to enter the new premises. One elderly resident swami in the building lovingly served Swamiji the traditional cup of warm milk with great devotion. Swamiji, at that time, was in his 88th year.

Even though Swamiji's advanced age now necessitated that he receive assistance in certain matters of daily life, Swamiji maintained his unassuming nature, never wishing to disturb others needlessly. He ate whatever was served to him. If he did not quite care for it, he said nothing; he just didn't eat it. He never asked for coffee or tea to be served. He never asked for any particular kind of eatable. He never asked for a newspaper or a book. If there were some startling world event and someone brought him a newspaper, he would look at the photos and read the text with great interest, and then return

the paper. The topic seemed to be put at rest in Swamiji's mind, for he never afterwards referred to it, although those around him might discuss certain events for days. Yet, his memory was sound, for if one of the senior Ashram Swamis were ailing, for example, Swamiji always remembered to enquire about him. Concerning matters of Advaita and the clearing of devotees' doubts, his mind was impeccably swift and sure. His replies came like a bullet straight to the bull's eye, infallibly terse, precise and on point. It seemed that there was just no anchoring in his mind for more trivial matters.

For four years, Swamiji lay on his bed without the common diversions of newspaper, television, radio, books, etc. There was a steady stream of students and devotees, who would come for darshan. Much of the time, Swamiji slept in as relaxed and peaceful a manner as a small child, and he never mentioned any aches or pains consequent to spending so much time lying on the bed. When he was awake, he rarely spoke but remained peaceful and acutely aware at all times. He was perfectly content in every way. It was really a wonder to behold. Even in his ripe old age, he tried to manage for himself without assistance as much as possible. Really, he never asked anyone for anything.

There were only a very few exceptions. On one occasion, someone presented Swamiji with a copy of the Ribhu Gita, an ancient Sanskrit scripture which forms a section of the Siva Rahasya, which had recently been translated and published in America. During the informal class that gathered around Swamiji in the afternoon, someone began reading that book and occasionally Swamiji would answer questions posed. Several times. Swamiji expressed an interest to compare the original Sanskrit text with the new translation. Immediately, a search was begun for the book, which was nowhere to be found, neither in the private collection of H.H. Sri Swami

Krishnanandaji Maharaj, nor in the Ashram library, nor neighbouring ashram libraries, nor in private collections anywhere the query was made. Eventually, a letter was sent to the American translator/publishers explaining the situation and requesting that a photocopy of the Sanskrit text might be made available. Their response made our otherwise placid Swamiji sit up abruptly on his bed in disbelief, for they replied that it was against the international copyright law for them to send a copy of this ancient Sanskrit text to India! By great good fortune, a book containing the desired text that had been published in India years ago was finally procured. When this volume was presented to Swamiji, he held it in both hands with great love and his whole countenance was filled with joy.

The second occasion occurred on the evening of the mahasamadhi of H.H. Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj. Swami Brahmananda was, at that time, in very frail health and totally bed-ridden. Nonetheless, on hearing the sad news, he immediately requested that arrangements be made, so that, he could pay final homage to the great Swami, whom he so much revered. A car and driver were retained to transport Swamiji and some attendants down the hill to the office of the General Secretary. Very slowly, on unsteady legs, Swamiji walked down the aisle into the chamber housing the mortal remains of the great Swami. In full solemnity and with total respect and adoration, Swami Brahmananda bowed three times with folded hands to his revered teacher. One could sense that, mentally, he was making full prostration thrice. Then, he sat for a few minutes in order to regain his strength and returned to the car.

The third occasion took place in July 2002. The Ashram was abuzz with the news that our most revered and worshipful President Swamiji, H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj, would be giving darshan to members of the Ashram on the 7th of July in his compound in Dehra Dun. Residents of the

Ashram had not had darshan of Swamiji Maharaj since the previous April, when he was whisked away in the middle of the night under dire medical emergency. Reports that his health was failing and that we might never again be blessed with his darshan were on everyone's tongue and mind. Now, buses had been retained to transport members of the Ashram to Dehra Dun, and everyone wanted to go. One by one, the various persons attending Swamiji, as well as the usual stream of sadhak-visitors, were explaining the situation to him, so that, he would not be concerned on noticing their absence. On the evening of July 6th, Swami Brahmananda took them all by surprise by suddenly asking. "May I not also go for darshan?" Arrangements were quickly begun and a phone call made to Dehra Dun to convey Swamiji's desire. Due to the rush of graciously suggested people expected, President Swamiji most that Swami Brahmananda come for private darshan on the 18th.

Swamiji, accompanied by three assistants, traveled to Dehra Dun on that day for darshan of worshipful President Swamiji, H.H. Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. The compound gates had been opened, so that, the car could pull right up to the main entry. It was a grand darshan. Revered President Swamiji spoke for about an hour, beginning with the Vedantic maxim 'Brahma Satyam Jagan Mithya'. President Maharaj enquired about Swamiji's general health, diet and regime and later stated to an attendant, "Throughout my travels around the world, many devotees have enquired about the health of Swami Brahmanandaji. Today, I can truly say I have had the honour of darshan of a Jnani on Guruvar*". Revered President Swamiji referred to Swami Brahmanandaji as the very embodiment of Sri Dakshinamurti** and said that this holy monk truly upheld the glory of Satgurudev Sri Swami

Sivanandaji Maharaj and his noble mission. At the conclusion of the darshan, President Maharaj presented

"Guruvar is Thursday. Set aside for paying homage to Guru or Saints.

**Sri Dakshinamurti is considered as the primal Guru who expounds the knowledge of the Supreme Brahman.

Swamiji with a large basket containing the choicest fruits and a host of articles for daily use, all of the very finest quality.

In the year 1984, an astrologer gave some predictions after studying Swamiji's horoscope. It ran like this: "As Jupiter is posited in the Kendra Bhava from Mercury, Jupiter confers the results of Mercury pertaining to knowledge (Jnana), spiritual activities, etc. Jupiter (a benefic), who is posited in the Mokshasthana (12th house)... [in combination with the] positive and negative aspects of Saturn and Jupiter on the Moon, make the native a great philosopher.... Since Jupiter, [which is] governing the Mokshasthana, is aspecting fully on the Lagna Lord Venus, the native is always concerned about his emancipation. All authoritative books on Astrology support that an unaffected Jupiter in the 12th house confers liberation to the native. Hence, the immaculate Jupiter should make the native attain Self-realisation in this birth. As Venus and Jupiter are posited in the 9th and 5th from the Moon, the horoscope indicates a full span of life. At the end of Saturn Bukti, Swamiji shall recede from all spiritual activities and shall become more introspective. Jupiter's aspect on the 8th house (house of death) from Lagna indictes a happy egression without much ailing." A resident sadhak, who had seen the horoscope, predicted that a critical period would commence after May, 2002, lasting for about eighteen months. He mentioned that if Swamiji survived this period, little though chances were, he would see his 100th year.

As predicted in the horoscope, Swamiji's health started declining after May, 2002. General weakness increased. Swamiji felt disinclined even to walk the few steps from his bed to the chair on the outside verandah in order to take some fresh air, as had been his custom. After returning from the bathroom, he was very exhausted. Now and then, swelling in the feet appeared. When medicines failed to remove or reduce it, Swamiji would say with a smile, "Let it be there. These are the usual symptoms of old age." It was quite evident that he was waiting for 'that' moment. On June 26th, 2002, Swamiji completed his 92nd year, although no one knew it was his birthday. On July 18th, there was the darshan with President Swamiji. Shortly after this, in the middle of the night, Swamiji was awakened by a violent fit of coughing. It appeared out of the blue as there had been no symptoms of any kind. The body was shaking so much due to the coughing, that he had to be assisted so as not to fall off the bed. The coughing vanished as mysteriously as it had come, but it left Swamiji in a noticeably weakened condition. On several occasions during this time, Swamiji told his close devotees and attendants that, if anything serious happened to the body, no effort should be made to keep it alive by artificial means. Instead, it should be allowed to have a peaceful end. Within two hours, if possible, the body should be offered to Mother Ganga and information be sent later to people by letter.

Still, Swamiji remained inclined not to disturb anyone on his account. One early morning about 3:00 a.m., he went into the bathroom unattended. Somehow, he slipped and fell onto his back on the floor. Hearing the sound, the attendant rushed into the bathroom and found Swamiji struggling to get up. Fortunately, nothing unfortuitous happened. Swamiji returned to the bed, and within five minutes, had started snoring. He was not at all perturbed. But the attendant was greatly

concerned. Such a situation must be averted, but what could one do given the proclivity of Swamiji's nature? Fortunately, God had provided an attendant, who was a scientist by inclination and training. With the most painstaking care, over a period of days, this attendant fabricated a uniquely wired floor mat that could be placed just outside the bathroom entry. When Swamiji's foot would touch the mat, an electrical signal would be transmitted to a doorbell type device hidden in the closet, whose chiming would alert the attendant.

Swamiji lay on his bed watching in full interest, how the attendant meticulously wired and rewired the mat and fastened meters of electrical wire along the walls. This took several days. Swamiji just watched. He never asked what the attendant was doing. Then came the time when everything was ready and in working order. The attendant waited for Swamiji to go into the bathroom, and then made all the final connections. The several people there waited in full attention to see what would transpire when Swamiji emerged. Swamiji opened the bathroom door and looked around. Then in a thoroughly uncharacteristic manner, he took one giant stride, stepped completely over the mat, and looked up with a mischievous expression of triumph. We were blessed to witness this lila (Play). The scientific attendant took no time in contriving a better system by which Swamiji's movements were successfully monitored until the end.

On September 8th, the 115th Birthday Anniversary of His Holiness Gurudev Sri Swami Sivananda Maharaj was celebrated in the Ashram on a grand scale. Holy prasad was brought to Swami Brahmanandaji and he partook of this with full reverence and devotion. With folded hands and bowed head, he pranaamed in reverence towards the photograph of the Holy Master on his altar and offered rose petals on the sacred feet of the image of the Holy Master. Two days later,

being the 10th of September, marked the occasion of the sacred Sri Ganesha Chaturthi. Again, prasad was brought to Swamiji and he partook of it with great devotion, sharing the remainder with devotees gathered there. It was to be Swamiji's last prasad. Thus, blessed by Sri Gurudev and Sri Ganesha, Swamiji was preparing to take his leave.

On the night of September 11th, 2002, Swamiji had his usual light supper at about 8:00 p.m. At about 9:30 p.m., he started taking the usual medicines with some milk. Something got stuck near the chest resulting in intense chest pain. The doctor Swamiji came within minutes and made a general examination and advised rest. After sometime, Swamiji had a sound sleep. At about 2:30 a.m., he felt some uneasiness. Immediately, doctor Swamiji came and took an ECG, which revealed a massive heart attack. A heart specialist came from Rishikesh and gave some emergency injections, but no electro-shock was used. There seemed to be a little improvement. At about 5:00 a.m., H.H. Sri Swami Nirliptanandaji Maharaj, the Vice-President, came. When Swamiji was informed of that, immediately he opened his eyes, lifted his hands, and offered pranaams. When the Vice-President asked him if he was feeling any pain, he nodded his head to convey 'no'.

At about 6:00 a.m., the heart condition deteriorated further. By this time, a number of inmates and devotees had assembled in the room. They started chanting the Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra. Swamiji's face remained totally calm; his eyes were closed. When devotees began chanting, "Om Namo Bhagavate Sivanandaya', Swamiji opened his eyes and looked at the photograph of Gurudev on his altar, and again closed his eyes. Around 9:00 a.m., breathing became a little difficult, so oxygen was administered for a few minutes. But Swamiji started pushing away the oxygen mask. The attendant tried to convince Swamiji to wear it, but Swamiji steadfastly refused.

Hence, it was removed. Some time later, a gentle chanting of 'Om' was started close to Swamiji's good ear. Now and then, Ganges water was given. Whenever the attendant called, "Om Swamiji, Ganga Jalam," Swamiji would open his mouth and swallow the holy water without any difficulty. At about 1:50 p.m., breathing started slowing down and at 1:55 p.m., Swamiji breathed his last, amidst continuous chanting of "Om". Swamiji remained totally and completely calm throughout. He was in a very high state of consciousness, totally aware and totally peaceful. It was just that at some point, the breathing ceased.

Recitation of the sacred Bhagavad Gita and Vishnu Sahasranama began, as ashramites gathered in Swamiji's room. Shortly after 3:00 p.m., to the accompaniment of the Maha Mantra, Swamiji's body was carried on a stretcher down into the heart of the Ashram. All of the Ashram residents joined in the procession, which first paused in front of Sri Gurudev's Samadhi Shrine and then in front of Sri Visvanath Mandir. On both occasions, the chief pujari performed a special arati. Then the procession wended its way towards Visvanath Ghat amidst a mild drizzle. On Visvanath Ghat by the Ganga bank, the holy bath was given to the body accompanied by Vedic chanting; then it was covered with a new orange cloth and adorned with flowers. All the Senior Swamis of the Ashram performed arati. Around 4:30 p.m., the body was offered to Mother Ganga as a sacred Ganga-Arpana. The day was a Thursday (Guruvara), a day auspicious for worship of the Guru. Being September 12th, 2002, it was also Shashti Tithi, the sixth phase of the moon after new moon, which is especially auspicious in the worship of Lord Subrahmanya. These are the auspicious occurrences related to the mahasamadhi of H. H. Sri Swami Brahmanandaji Maharaj.

To us, Swamiji's life appears to be a replica of a description which he, himself, penned in The Supreme Knowledge:

"According to sage Vasishtha, there are two types of munis (a sage, who observes mauna or silence) - the rigid ascetic and the liberated sage. The former forcibly restrains his senses and engages himself in Yogic activities with fanaticism. The latter knows the Truth, and yet behaves as an ordinary person. Silence is of five kinds: i. silence of speech, ii. silence of sense organs, iii. violent restraint, iv. silence of the mind, and v. the silence of deep sleep during the waking state (sushupti-mauna). It is the last that is really conducive to liberation. In it, the prana is neither restrained nor promoted, the senses are neither fed nor starved, the perception of diversity is neither expressed nor suppressed, and the mind is neither mind nor non-mind. There is no division, and hence no effort whatsoever in transcending it. One, who is established in it may or may not meditate. He has the knowledge of what is, as it is. In that state, there is neither 'I' nor another, neither mind nor anything projected by the mind, and one knows that 'I' is but an idea and there is nothing other than Consciousness."

Once H.H. Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj remarked, "Gurudev's Mission has been fulfilled. His Ashram has produced one Brahmananda Swamiji."

Om Namo Bhagavate Sivanandaya!

Hari Om Tat Sat

Sivananda Ashram,

Rishi Panchami,

1st September 2003.

YOGA AND LIFE

There exists a common belief, certainly an erroneous one, among the majority that Yoga is for those, who live in caves and forests, in monasteries and nunneries, away from the busy world, in seclusion, minding their own business without the least concern about other fellow-beings, renouncing the normal pleasures of life and aiming at some post-mortem happiness, in some far-off unknown worlds not seen by any one so far. While these recluses give up all the happiness of this world, the happiness in the form of enjoyments afforded by rich and affluent family life with all the modern facilities, high status in society, name and fame and the like, in the name of spiritual renunciation, the vast majority of people are not sure of the future happiness aimed at by these recluses. Thus arguing, most people shun all the higher values of life, which religion and philosophy offer. This is a sad mistake resulting from, want of the right knowledge about life in this world.

Renunciation of the world is found to be the common factor in all scriptures dealing with Liberation as the only sure remedy for all our sufferings here in this world. This may sound strange. One, who wants good has to renounce the bad. This is understandable. He who desires truth should renounce untruth. There cannot be any difference of opinion in this also. One who is after life should naturally give up death. None will deny these logical conclusions. But, if what is intended in the renunciation of the world is giving up of our normal life with all sense-experiences, what remains in our life? Nothing! The remedy seems to be worse than the illness! This conclusion is a result of not understanding-the real import of the scriptures. Vedanta does in no way find fault with this world, but certainly instructs man, who is after Liberation, to renounce it. It is not renunciation resulting from a dislike and hatred of this world. It is renunciation by covering the world with God, in the language

of the Isavasya Upanishad, filling the world with God. We are asked to renounce the world of our, present erroneous conception and realise its true nature. In short, to see the world as God is real renunciation of the world, prescribed by the seers, who have seen the Truth.

Just as, the different parts of a big banyan tree, such as, its underground roots, the aerial roots, the stem, the branches, the leaves and the fruits, though appearing separate, are yet not different from the tree; just as our limbs, the legs, hands, eyes, ears and mouth, though seemingly separate, are not distinct from the body; just as the various parts of a huge modern machinery are all inter-connected and serve the common purpose for which the machine has been erected, likewise, the umpteen objects which we see here and which we consider as separate entities are not independent and disjointed, but form a whole to make up this universe, an organic whole by itself. The least disturbance in any corner of this vast cosmos, let it be in. the most insignificant object, affects the whole cosmos, even as the slightest pin-prick in any part of our body is felt by the whole being. A scientific analysis of any object here. say a chair, will prove that it is made up of atoms which are finally reduceable to forces. When we perceive through the intellect, these forces that constitute the chair, the chair as such vanishes; and when the chair is seen, we do not perceive the forces: These forces have Consciousness as their substratum. No hair-splitting arguments are necessary to prove that nothing can exist without Consciousness.

Pure Consciousness is therefore the basic reality. It is the perceiving principle, the object perceived and the principle of perception also. In other words, Consciousness which cannot but be one, homogeneous and non-dual, and therefore eternal and immortal, is called by the different names of seer, seen

and sight, hearer, hearing and heard, knower, known and knowledge, and so on. Again, it is this Consciousness alone that is referred to through different names, such as Brahman or Atman by Vedantins, Bhagavan or God by devotees, Vishnu or Narayana by Vaishnavas, Siva or Paramesvara by Saivites. Other religions of the world give different names for this one Principle, the Truth Supreme. It is called as Christ by the Christians, Allah by the Muslims, Arhat by the Jainas and Buddha by the Buddhists.

The truth about the relationship between God and the world is beautifully brought out in a simple Tamil verse which means: The wood is veiled by the elephant and into the wood disappears the elephant; even so, elements veil the Truth and into Truth disappear the elements.

The reference is to a life-size elephant made out of black wood by an expert carpenter. The, likeness is complete. Though the eyes perceive the form of an elephant, the intellect and the mind will perceive the wood of which it is made. It is the form of the elephant that veils the wood and when the truth of the wood is seen, the elephant disappears. Likewise says the verse, this world made up of the five elements veils the Consciousness, and when one realises the latter, the former dissolves itself.

Knowing, experiencing and becoming one with the Consciousness is Yoga. This Yoga practice varies according to individual temperament. The rationalistic, the devotional, the active and the mystic temperaments, with their countless permutation-combinations, make the Yoga practice of each individual distinct from those of others. Strictly speaking, no two aspirants can follow an exactly similar method. Notwithstanding this, there are common factors in the methodology adopted by all seekers. Not a few in this modern

world are benefited by a combination of the essentials in the different Yoga systems. Hence it is that sages prescribe this wise mixture-a little of Japa, a little Asana and Pranayama, study of some scriptures, worship of one's tutelary deity, selfless service, concentration and meditation- especially for the neophytes in the spiritual path. When they go on practising all these intelligently and sincerely for a sufficiently long time, each one finds himself attached to that particular Yoga which is best suited to his temperament or natural turn of mind acquired as a result of the Karmas done in innumerable past lives, the others dropping off without his knowledge. And further concentration along the lines of the one particular Yoga with one's whole personality-not as a hobby, but as one's sole aim and purpose of life-takes one to the Supreme Awareness.

Om Tat Sat

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF THE SUPREME KNOWLEDGE

Humble obeisance to the Supreme Lord who is transcendental and also immanent at the same time and who is the Self in all, who is the all.

1. The Goal and the Means: Man thinks: 'I am the body. The world is real; it is outside me. And God is transcendental.' When the ultimate Truth revealed in the Upanishads is realised, he experiences: 'I am not the body, but pure Consciousness. The world is unreal as the world, but is the expression of the same Consciousness, nay, Consciousness itself. And God is not only transcendental Consciousness but also immanent as Consciousness in the world.' Thus, the 'I'-consciousness,

The world-consciousness and God-consciousness coalesce and become one without a second. The word 'Consciousness', with its dictionary meaning as generally conceived by the mind, cannot convey what Consciousness really is. For that matter, no word can convey the experience of the pure Consciousness, for It is beyond the ken of the mind and speech. It is the bold declaration of the scriptures and Sages that one who realises this Truth is beyond the pains of this transmigratory life (the life of repetitive birth, existence and death) and is in a state of Ananda, Bliss-Absolute. What is the nature of the experience of this world after realisation? One experiences that the whole world including one's body-mind complex is a superimposition on the pure Consciousness like the superimposition of a necklace or a bracelet on gold. Because the substratum which is Consciousness is real, all the world including one's body and mind acquires apparent reality, though the reality is of the substratum alone. The experience of the universe and all beings in it in the three states of waking,

dream and deep sleep, is seen as a long dream. To such a person others may seem to be real or unreal or non-existent or as pure Consciousness. To others he is seen to be real as the body-mind complex. This relative reality of the world is like the 'reality' experienced in the dream objects. The Absolute is inclusive, and beyond this phenomenal 'real' and 'unreal'. Realisation of this Truth is the Goal of life.

The time-honoured teachings of the Upanishads, which are there from the beginningless time, have the greatest relevance to the world at all times. The phenomenal world, as it has ever been, is deluded in stupor and inertia, misunderstanding and materialism. Time does not wither the eternal Truth nor does it effect the cessation of suffering. The Upanishadic Truth has always been there for silencing all speculative philosophies. The attainment of Liberation is not the prerogative of any one individual or any particular group or selected few. Anyone who has a purified intellect and understanding can grasp this central Truth contained in the Upanishads. The absence of this grasp gives rise to clinging to ideas and concepts at every step, and the interpreted instructions in the Upanishadsabare grammatically and understood or literally. When the Upanishad states that the Truth is universal, Cosmic Awareness which transcends individuality, the intellect which is not purified and sharp clings to the words and the ideas behind them and the result is formation of an individual, limited concept in the mind. When the Upanishad says that the Universal also is to be transcended to reach the Isvara Consciousness, again that also is made a concept by the individual mind. When the Upanishad proclaims the Ultimate Truth that all things are finally the one, non-dual, supreme Consciousness, that is also conceptualised and the aspirant clings to that concept. The very instruction that the Truth should not be conceptualised is itself conceptualised! This is

the nature of the lower mind, the mind which has not been purified by practice of self-control. Thus the Goal is missed, rather It slips away like a globule of mercury on the floor when one tries to take it by the hand.

Is there a way to realise this Truth which is beyond all thought and word and beyond all phenomena of this world? Yes, and that is the practice of vidyas as given in the Upanishads.

2. What is Upanishad? By the term 'Upanishad' is meant the concluding portion of the Vedas dealing with the nature of the Absolute. Scholars have different interpretations of the term 'Upanishad'. It is said that the old meaning of this term is 'secret doctrine', containing mystic and super-rational knowledge about the Absolute. Sri Dramidacharya, a philosopher belonging to the pre-Sankara period, is said to be a pioneer in giving a new interpretation to this word 'Upanishad'. He gave the meaning Brahma-vidya, realisation of pithe Brahman-Atman-identity which destroys the avidya, the primal nescience. Hence texts which help this realisation also are called Upanishads. The emphasis on the mystic and ultra-rational aspect which is seen in the old meaning is later on shifted to the harmony of the mystic vision with the philosophical conclusion that is arrived at by a proper use of meditation, logic and ratiocination ending in deep nidhyasana. This word 'Upanishad' is to be understood as that which connotes a hidden and secret instruction on the supreme Truth which is the substratum for the visible phenomenon of the world. It reveals the mystery behind the sense world, the world as seen by the senses and the mind.

The Upanishads are contained in the Vedas. There are four Vedas and each Veda contains as many Upanishads as there are sakhas (branches). The Rig Veda is said to contain 21 branches, the Yajur Veda 109 branches, the Sama Veda 1000

branches and the Atharva Veda 50 branches. Thus the total number of Upanishads comes to 1180. Among them 108 are considered important and among the 108 twelve are deemed very important. These twelve Upanishads are: Isa, Kena, Katha, Prasna, Mundaka, Mandukya, Taittiriya, Aitareya, Chhandogya, Brihadaranyaka, Svetasvatara and Kaushitaki. Some include the Maitrayani-upanishad also among the very important Upanishads.

The language of these Upanishads being very terse and very often archaic, they give ample room for different interpretations by scholars. Hence acknowledging the supreme authority of the Upanishads, different philosophers have formulated different systems of philosophies or schools of thought such as Vaiseshika, Nyaya, Yoga, Samkhya, Purva-Mimamsa and Uttara-Mimamsa, as also Advaita, Visishta-Advaita and Dvaita and several others.

Till recently only the 108 Upanishads were published.

Subsequently 12 more were added and 120 Upanishads were printed and published. Now very recently 68 more have been added and we have 188 Upanishads in one volume edited with Sanskrit introduction by Prof. J.L.

Shastri and published by Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, Varanasi and Patna, under the title Upanishad-samgrahah.

3. What is Vidya? The dictionary defines the word vidya as knowledge, learning, lore, science. According to some, there are said to be fourteen vidyas. They are: the four Vedas, (Rik, Yajus, Sama and Atharva), the six vedangas (auxiliary to Vedas), Siksha-the science of proper pronunciation and articulation, Vyakarana- grammar, Chhandas-science of prosody, Nirukta -etymological explanation of obscure words, especially those occurring in the Vedas, Jyotisha- astronomy, and Kalpa-science of rituals, ceremonials and sacrificial acts),

Dharma, Mimamsa, Nyaya and Puranas. This word vidya is used in the Upanishads in the sense of jnana (Knowledge Supreme), and also upasanas (devout meditation) because upasana leads to jnana. Dhyana is another term which, when translated into English, gives the meaning of meditation. The two terms vidya and upasana have a shade of difference in their connotations, as for example in the case of Aditya-vidya and Aditya-upasana. In the latter the object of worship and meditation is taken as the physical sun that we see in the sky, while in the former the object of meditation is the Purusha within the sun. The word 'Brahma-vidya' can mean meditation on Brahman, as also Knowledge of Brahman and Knowledge which is Brahman. Similarly, the word 'Atma-vidya' means meditation on the Atman and Knowledge of the Atman and Knowledge which is the Atman. Some say that vidyas like Sandilya-vidya, Madhu-vidya, etc., are Brahma-vidyas. Sri Acharya Sankara interprets the expression guhya-adesa 'secret instructions' occurring in the Chhandogya-upanishad III-5-i and ii, as involving meditation. The word 'Upanishad' in mantra II-4-x of the Brihadaranyaka-upanishad, according to him, applies to those portions relating to meditation.

In yoga scriptures, the words dharana, dhyana and samadhi and also samyama are used to signify deep meditation. The word 'samadhi' may be said to be the equalisation of the Consciousness in the subject and the object. It is the restoration of the balance in the Consciousness which may be said to be out of balance when there is Aseparate world-consciousness. Nididhyasana is another word used in Vedantic literature to signify deep meditation which follows after long and continued reflection on the 'object' of meditation. Prasamkhyana is also a term which means meditation. The word 'yoga' also is largely used in the sense of meditation. Although yoga strictly means the final consummation wherein

the individual Consciousness merges as it were with the universal Consciousness, all preliminary practices leading to this final state are also called yoga. Similarly ritualistic worship, chanting of stotras, japa (oral and mental), reflection and cogitation on the real nature of oneself may also come under the purview of the term 'meditation', because all of them end in meditation. Introversion of the mind is involved in them, because it has to be turned away from the sense objects. The word vijnana also is sometimes used to mean meditation. The term tapas also means meditation in many contexts. In the present context where we are concerned with the meditations in the Upanishads, the words vidya and upasana are used as synonyms to mean deep meditation which are intended to act as correctives for the binding effects of human thought and actions.

Gurudev H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj says:

"Meditation is the centering of the force of thought on the highest conception of the ideal to be attained. Hence meditation starts with a belief in the reality of a dual existence, for without such a faith in duality meditation becomes impossible. Meditation starts with duality and ends in the glorious Consciousness of the unity of life. A belief in the degrees of truth and reality in Being is necessitated by the fact that the whole universe is a gradual materialisation of the highest Brahman Itself. A completely transcendent Being unconnected with the meditator is impossible to be meditated upon. Truth is immanent too. The object of meditation (the subject which is really the infinite) is very closely connected with the meditator and exists as his very essence, and hence the possibility of the realisation of the Infinite through meditation. The world is to be made use of as a step in the ladder of ascent to the glory of transcendental spiritual perfection."

A thoughtful or deep consideration and deep reflection on any object or concept especially spiritual-this is the common dictionary meaning of the word 'meditation'. 'Contemplation' is another word which also means the same process of deep and serious thinking on a given subject. It is a well-known fact that concentration is to direct one's thoughts or efforts towards the object of concentration and that concentration leads to contemplation and meditation. The two words 'concentration' and 'meditation' also seem to have a somewhat similar meaning, the latter being a more intense form of the former in the field of religion and philosophy. In spiritual literature the object of meditation is always the supreme God or any of His manifestations. Starting with contemplation on His partial manifestations or their symbols, the process of meditation culminates in Being, wherein Chit (Consciousness-Absolute) becomes one with Sat (Existence-Absolute). Sat is Chit and Chit is Ananda (Bliss-Absolute). In the highest meditation which Upanishads prescribe, the Sat which we are to meditate upon is 'the Being in the subject and the object' without the subject and object. It is Existence-Absolute which includes the existence of everything including that of the meditator' and at the same time excludes and is devoid of 'everything'. Therefore in such meditations the meditator becomes one with that Absolute on which he meditates. This stage can only be even 'experienced', but not explained, perhaps not 'experienced' in the usual sense of the term. At this stage the word 'meditation' loses its usual meaning of being a mental process and assumes a totally different significance. In raja-yoga it is dhyana, the last but one step, which effects the final consummation of spiritual endeavour.

Some say: "Meditation is communion with an unseen Realm that pours its influence upon us and makes us new men. The test of this influence is experience of 'peace' in life. Meditation

is an experience which blooms in the feeling of the presence of God in daily life. This experience lifts us above the world of atoms and electrons. This experience links us with the Atman wherein Truth abides and Love is radiant and Beauty hath her eternal shrine."

Meditation, according to Sage Patanjali, is the process of keeping a continuous and uninterrupted flow of the mind towards the chosen object. Sri Acharya Sankara a short treatise on in his Aparokshanubhuti, God-experience, defines meditation as that state in which the mind, without any support, holds on to the satvritti, that most auspicious modification of the mind 'I am Brahman verily, which is the bestower of supreme Bliss. And this meditation, says the Acharya, leads to complete changelessness of mind and complete forgetfulness of all thoughts, which culminates in identification with Brahman, which is termed samadhi and also jnana.

While commenting on the 24th verse in chapter XIII of the Bhagavad-gita, Acharya Sankara says that dhyana (meditation) consists in the withdrawal of the senses from their respective objects through concentration into the mind, and then withdrawal of the mind into the inner intelligence and then contemplating on the inner intelligence. He refers to the analogies cited by the Chhandogya-upanishad VII-6-i: "The space meditates as it were, the earth meditates as it were, the mountains meditate as it were, etc."

He also says that meditation is a continuous and unbroken thought on the object of meditation like a line of flowing oil. Again, in his monumental commentary on the Brihadaranyaka-upanishad, in one place (1-3-ix), he defines meditation as mentally approaching the form of the deity meditated upon as it is presented by the eulogistic portions of the Vedas relating to that particular deity and concentrating on it excluding

conventional notions, till one is as completely identified with it as with one's body conventionally regarded as one's Self.

While dealing with 'tat tvam-asi' maha-vakya, Suresvaracharya in his Naishkarmya-siddhi III-90, refers to the view of some that prasamkhyana means repeated dwelling in thought on what is proclaimed by texts such as tat-tvam-asi and its intellectual ascertainment by rational discrimination. When this kind of prasamkhyana is practised, it generates complete knowledge by progressively increasing the measure of right knowledge and not by simply increasing the concentration of mind. It is unlike the false conviction that a woman is beautiful by constantly thinking about the beauty in her body.

To quote Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji again, he says: "here are three kinds of wisdom-meditations. The first is Brahma-bhavana, feeling that everything is Brahman, that there is no such thing as 'other than Brahman', that Brahman alone exists, and so 'That One' is the immortal Brahman, the infinite Existence. The second is padartha-bhavana-tyaga-renuciation of the idea that things which we see are mere material objects, i.e. affirmation of the fact that what seem to be physical worlds and material bodies are really the Supreme Soul, Brahman alone and that all is Brahman Itself. The third is kevala-bhavana, feeling that the subject is identical with the object, that there are no two such things as subject and object, that the individual is identical with the Supreme and hence 'that one' is the Absolute, independent Brahman."

Brahma-abhyasa also can be considered as a form of meditation. The Yoga Vasishtha, Utpatti-prakarana 22-xxiv, says: tat-chintanam tat-kathanam anyonyam prabodhanam; etad-eka-paratvam cha tad-abhyasam vidur-budhah-The wise know that reflecting about the supreme

Brahman alone, speaking about That alone, conversing mutually about That alone and thus completely being occupied with That alone is meditation on Brahman. Some others describe Brahma-abhyasa thus: "This phenomenal universe has never been created and therefore it does not really exist as different from the Absolute. What appears as this world and also as 'I' does not exist apart from pure Consciousness. Consciousness alone is. Making this conviction firm through repetition is Brahma-abhyasa."

The Upanishads, which deal mainly with supreme non-dual Knowledge, also instruct on three kinds of upasanas: upasana for attainment of material prosperity, upasana on the lower Brahman the result of which is gradual liberation, and upasana connected with ritualistic karmas and sacrifices for enhancing the results of karmas. All the three involve mental vrittis. Advaita-jnana also may be said to involve a vritti which finally dissolves by itself after making the meditator one with the non-dual Truth. All of them find a place in the Upanishads. All upasanas reflect the Truth, and hence they are helpful to attain the Advaita-jnana. It is therefore very significant that the scriptures use both the terms 'vidya' and 'jnana' for upasana. As there is something for the mind to rest upon, these upasanas are said to be comparatively easy to practice for the majority of the aspirants. Since pure upasana unconnected with rituals is more difficult for those who are habituated to the performance of karmas, those upasanas in combination with karmas are also included in some places.

The commentator, Sri Sankaracharya, points out that there are three classes of men who wish to acquire wisdom. The highest consists of those who have renounced the world, controlled their mind and who are eager for liberation, for whom are intended the Upanishads. There are others who wish to attain gradual liberation by attaining the world of Hiranyagarbha, for

whom is intended knowledge and worship of Prana. The third class consists of those who care only for worldly possessions for whom the meditative worship of the samhita is intended.

One of the minor Upanishads says: The best sadhana is tattva-chintanam, meditation on the Supreme; lower to that comes sastra-chintanam, meditation on the various scriptural teachings; still lower to it is mantra-chintanam, meditation on the mantra into which one is initiated by one's preceptor; and the lowest is tirtha-yatra, pilgrimage to holy places and bath in sacred rivers. One may start with tirtha-yatra, then take up mantra-chintanam, thereafter sastra-chintanam and reach the last step of tattva-chintanam. But one is not to stagnate even in the last stage of meditation on the Supreme. He has to pass on to the final stage of non-dual identity. This fact is hinted at in a verse in the Avadhuta-gita which says:

tvad -yatraya vyapakata hata te, dhyanena chetah-parata hata te, stutya maya vak-parata hata te, kshamasva nityam trividha'paradhan.

This verse entreats pardon from the Lord for three 'sins' committed daily. What are those 'sins'? They are: (i) through pilgrimage one rides rough-shod over the all-pervasive- and beyond-space-nature of the Supreme; (ii) through meditation one sets at naught the great Vedic declaration that the Atman-Brahman is beyond the reach of the mind; and (iii) through verses of praise one, without any consideration, domineers over the transcendental nature of the Absolute which is beyond all speech (VIII-1).

Pilgrimage, chanting hymns in praise of the Lord and meditation on Him-three daily practices of a seeker, are referred to as 'sins' in this verse. This is to be taken as eulogy

on the Supreme Brahman and not decrying or discouraging saguna-upasana through holy pilgrimages, ritualistic worship, study of scriptures and meditation as prescribed in the Upanishads. All forms of worship and meditation involve duality and the Supreme is non-dual, nay, beyond even non-duality.

Spiritual literature such as the Upanishads, the Bhagavad-gita and the Brahma Sutras constituting the prasthana-traya of the Vedantins, as also other scriptures like the Yoga Vasishtha, Srimad-Bhagavata, other Puranas and the Epics give us several techniques for meditation, some succinctly and others in a more elaborate form. In the karma and upasana kandas of the Vedas, we have elaborate accounts of various techniques of meditation which are combined with ritualistic worship and sacrifices. The meditations in the Upanishads called vidyas may be said to be preparatory practices to be done by aspirant before he approaches his spiritual master for the final initiation into the supreme Knowledge through the maha-vakyas. Meditation may be said to occupy an intermediate position between karma and jnana. One should start with karma, then combine karma with meditation, then practise pure meditation leaving off karma and finally attain jnana, the Supreme Knowledge. In short, here in the Upanishads the term vidya means Knowledge and meditation, a comprehensive insight into the nature of the Reality behind the phenomena.

4. Nature of Truth: The essential nature of man 'Absolute'. The Absolute Itself, through Its own inherent, inexpressible, illusory power called maya or ajnana, has hidden Itself as it were and has projected Itself as this phenomenal universe, in which It Itself appears as a transmigrating individual with all kinds of limitations. This illusion of ajnana can be done away with only through jnana (Knowledge-Supreme) which is neither objective nor subjective. The 'Absolute', as the term itself

indicates, is unconditioned and non-relational and therefore cannot be thought of, much less expressed in words, as an object or even as the subject, for the mind and the organ of speech are both of limited power, being themselves products of the illusory power.

For purposes of instruction, the scriptures say that there are however two aspects of this Absolute which can be brought under human thought and given expression to through speech. They are called the saguna and nirguna (with attributes and without attributes); also called sakara and nirakara (with form and without form). The form is present in the formless, even as a statue is present in an uncarved block of marble. The attributes are similarly present in the attributeless.

The attributeless aspect is generally known through the epithet Sat-chit-ananda, Existence-Consciousness- Bliss-Absolute. In the empirical sense the three terms Existence, Consciousness and Bliss may appear to be three different attributes. But in contexts where these words are used to give the definition of the essential nature of the Absolute, they lose their empirical meanings and connote the one, non-dual, infinite Atman-Brahman alone. In order to remove the sense of limitation which these three words may create in the mind, the commentators say that they should be understood as negating their opposites. Existence therefore means 'not non-existence', Consciousness means 'not unconsciousness', and Bliss means 'not misery and pain'. Thus the term Sat-chit-ananda means denial of the attributes of non-existence, unconsciousness and unhappiness. Actually the word nirguna does not mean 'without attributes' as generally translated. The attributes of God are different from worldly limited attributes, for God's attributes are limitless and endless. He possesses simultaneously all attributes taken to their logical limits and beyond, both the so-called positive and negative, the good and

the bad, the pleasurable and the painful. Because He is infinite, there cannot be such differences as positive and negative, good and bad, merit and sin, light and darkness, etc. in Him. Thus the attributelessness becomes an attribute of God. Hence He is both saguna and nirguna and transcends both, all simultaneously.

The other aspect of the Absolute which is with attributes' called saguna-Brahman, Isvara, is to be understood as the causal form of the universe, who is the supreme Person, who is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of this universe. Maya, the great illusory power is the cause of Isvara who wields it as his own power for his further manifestations as Hiranyagarbha (the subtle, cosmic intelligence, mind and vital force) and as Virat (the sum total as it were of all these gross universes). All the three, viz. Isvara, Hiranyagarbha and Virat are the universal manifestations of the supreme Absolute in the causal, subtle and gross forms respectively. The further manifestations of Virat are Brahma, Vishnu and Siva (the trinities) and the universal deities such as Indra, Agni, Varuna, Dik-devatas, etc. in charge of the different functions in the universe, the superhuman and sub-human beings and the insentient objects. The universal deities occupy and preside over every limb of the individual who is himself a part of the universal, a limb in an organic whole which the universe is.

The avataras such as Sri Rama, Lord Krishna and the rest are also He alone. People immersed in the sense-world fail to understand the inscrutable power and glory of the Lord. Devotional scriptures describe the divine nature of the devotees of the Lord, which may seem to be fantastic and unbelievable to the modern mind of man. Devotees talk to God as we talk each other. Scriptures are replete with instances where God served His devotees by providing them wealth, provisions, etc. to celebrate marriages and did menial, physical

service such as cleaning the floor, drawing water from the well and the like. There have been instances where great devotees were bodily taken to Vaikuntha (the world of Lord Vishnu) and Kailasa (the world of Lord Siva). All this is possible when there is complete devotion and self-surrender to the Lord. It is all a wonder to the ignorant and the non-believing. They may even go to the extent of saying that it is all hallucination. But to the devoted and the Knowers of Truth, it is their own uncontradicting experience. They finally experience not only certain particular manifestations as God, but also the whole universe without leaving an atom as God; for what else is all this that is seen and heard of, if not His expressions, His glory!

The Supreme is also described as omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. He is omniscient, because He is pure Consciousness itself. He is said to be sarvajna and sarvavit which means that He has knowledge of the general essence of all and also has got particular knowledge of every individual object. Wherever there is knowledge, there is power also. The latter is the form taken by the former. Power becomes perfect and complete when knowledge becomes perfect. Therefore omniscience is omnipotence. These two naturally presuppose omnipresence. That which is not omnipresent cannot be omniscient and omnipotent. Thus, these three terms mean one and the same, namely, the Supreme, the Infinite. They should not be considered as mere adjectives qualifying the conditioned Infinite.

The full and complete significance of the term 'infinite' cannot be grasped by the individual intellect which is by its very nature, finite and limited. When through spiritual practice the individual intellect transcends its individuality and separateness and becomes one with the Cosmic Intelligence, it realises what the Infinite is. Then there is no understanding of the Infinite by the finite, as there are no two separate entities

as the finite and Infinite. A drop in the ocean may be said to know the ocean only in a figurative sense when it realises its oneness with the ocean. As long as it thinks in its ignorance that it is distinct from the ocean, that it is insignificant and small while the ocean is great and vast, it is only a drop and not the mighty ocean. But even while it is thinking that it is only a drop and separate from the ocean, it is really one with the ocean, nay, it is the ocean itself. Similar is the case with the individual and the Infinite.

The Infinite is said to be veiled, as it were, by ignorance. The question naturally arises as to how the Infinite can be veiled. The very idea of such a veiling of the Infinite involves self-contradiction. There is nothing other than the Infinite. Otherwise the Infinite cannot be said to be Infinite. Even if we presume the existence of something other than the Infinite hypothetically, that something can only be finite, for there cannot be more than one Infinite. And a finite entity can never veil the Infinite. Again, if we are to admit that the Infinite is really
veiled due to some kind of obscuration, then the Infinite could no longer be called Infinite and It would have to be relegated to the realm of the finites which alone can be subjected to changes such as veiling and revealing.

But we see from our daily experience, which is the uniform experience of all people, that our real nature of Infinite-Absolute-Existence-Consciousness-Bliss

remains veiled or obscured, in as much as we are not aware of it and we think and believe that we are finite mortals beyond redemption. The trouble does not stop with mere obscuration. In place of the non-dual Supreme, we perceive a world of multiplicity which appears real to all the five senses and the mind, and we are subjected to the merciless play of the pairs of opposites such as pleasure and pain, likes and dislikes, etc.

The work of ajnana, also called maya, is now complete and millions and billions of lives pass on endlessly in the cycle of transmigration which is termed samsara, meaning endless going and coming like the continuous movement of the pots in the Persian wheel either moving up filled with water or moving down empty.

This individual intellect caught up in this wheel cannot understand fully the nature of the cause of samsara, because it is a part of it, like a small ant caught up in one of the pots in the Persian wheel. An effect can never know its cause as long as the effect remains as an effect.

Once a father took his young boy of three or four to a marriage celebration of a near and dear relative. Returning home after attending the various programmes in the marriage function such as the rituals, music performances, dances, dinner and so on, the father was explaining to the mother of the boy (his own wife) in a picturesque manner every detail of their experiences in the celebration. This conversation between the husband and wife naturally turned to the more elaborate and nice programmes in their own marriage ceremony which was celebrated only some five years back. The young intelligent boy was listening all the time with great interest, and suddenly asked his father: "Daddy, why did you not take me to your marriage?" How could the father satisfy the child with a proper answer to its question! Even if the father explained the cause of his not taking him, how could the child of three or four years grasp its significance! The parents gave a hearty laugh, took the child in their arms and hugging it to their bosom, kissed it and caressed it. The question of the child is inadmissible. Somewhat similar is the case of all questions with regard to God and His creation raised in the state of ignorance.

The Infinite becoming veiled is a mystery which cannot be logically explained. The cause of this veiling, which is ignorance, is also an equally mysterious entity which can not be said to be either existent or non-existent. It is therefore called anirvachaniya in Sanskrit, which term itself means 'that which is inexpressible through words'. The effect of this cause which is this phenomenal world is also equally mysterious, in the sense that though appearing real and concrete, it does not stand the test of a philosophical enquiry. The sages who have solved this mystery are also a mystery. So the Upanishad says: "ascharyo vakta kusalo'sya labdha ascharyo jnata kusala'nusishtah-The expounder of this mystery-the mystery of the Supreme and Its manifestation as this universe is wonderful. The receiver of Its knowledge is wonderful. And wonderful is he who knows It, being instructed by the preceptor" (Ka. Up. 1-2-vii). The Bhagavad-gita also voices the same truth: "ascharyavat pasyati kaschid-enam ascharyavad-vadati tathaiva cha'nyah; ascharyavach-chainam-anyah srinoti srutvapy-enam veda na chaiva kaschit-One sees the Supreme as a wonder. Another speaks of It as a wonder. Another hears of It as a wonder. And though hearing about It, none understands It at all" (11-29). The whole thing is a mystery to the mind of the common man. That which causes the mind to say that everything is a mystery, is also a mystery. We always think in terms of others' thoughts which we get from the time of birth-thoughts of mother, father, teachers, friends, scientists, etc. We become their friends and we start thinking like them about the nature of this world, that it is something real and external to us.

A thief becomes a welcome guest if one becomes friendly with him and then that one also becomes a thief. But if one is not a thief, he does not consider theft as desirable. If one joins a group of thieves and becomes one among them, then to that

one, thieving will become justifiable and there will be nothing wrong in it. All men have joined with the wrong notion about the world and hence are unable to know the mistake. When one detaches oneself from it, the world as reported by the senses will be seen as relative and phenomenal and all previous notions of its reality as wrong.

The human intellect, which is a product of this great mystery, cannot answer the why of the mystery of the Infinite getting Itself obscured and veiled and the One Infinite becoming the many finites. But it has been solved by the great sages by transcending their individual intellect, and their experiences have been recorded which go by the name of scriptures. They say that it is ajnana (the primal nescience) that is at the root of this mystery. It is the ignorance of the true nature of one's own Self and of the universe. What is this ignorance and how to destroy it and its effects so that we may regain our true nature?

Let us take any one of the classical analogies provided by the scriptures, say, the rope-snake illusion. Just as in this analogy perception of the snake is due to ignorance of the rope, perception of this world is due to ignorance of the supreme Brahman. The unreal snake makes the man jump and run causing injury and pain in his leg. Similarly, this phenomenal world creates all sorts of pain and misery. Even as the remedy in the analogy is knowledge of the rope alone, here also the only panacea for all our ills and sufferings caused by this world is knowledge of the Atman-Brahman-one's own Self, the Self in all. In the analogy, we say that an unreal snake is superimposed on the real rope. Similarly, the phenomenal world is said to be superimposed on the Noumenon-the Atman-Brahman, the only Reality which transcends the phenomenal 'real' and the 'unreal'. This superimposition itself is a false one and an impossibility in the Infinite. But it is seen

to have been made possible by the absence of proper discrimination.

This body-(both the gross and the subtle) with all its constituents such as skin, flesh, blood, bones and marrow, the vital force, the sense and motor organs, the mind, the intellect and the ego principle-which forms a part of the world, is also a superimposition on the Atman, the innermost essence which is non-different from Brahman. The term 'Atman' is used by the scriptures to denote the supreme Brahman with reference to the individual body. The Infinite is limited as it were by the body. Thus seemingly encaged, It struggles to regain its original nature of infinity and complete freedom. All activities of man, day in, day out, are the result of this urge of the Soul within. All organisations starting from the small family in a house, right up to a world government (a pious hope of great world reformers) are aimed, consciously or unconsciously, at this one goal of complete freedom from pain and limitations through expansion of the individual into the Universal, and then into the Infinite. All these external activities are only artificial and temporary remedies for the great ill of ignorance. And being creations of the intellect which is also an effect of ignorance and a part of the world, these remedies cannot but prove futile, even as the best doctor only fails to remove the poison of the rope-snake in the analogy. All activities are of no avail here. All actions, by their very nature and by the nature of the instruments involved (such as the body, the mind, etc.) are bound to be limited. And how can that which is unlimited and Infinite be a result of the limited and finite actions? It can never happen. When the cause is limited, the effect also is bound to be limited. Therefore the scriptures prescribe Knowledge, the Supreme Knowledge which eradicates the primeval nescience and thus destroys the root-cause of all sufferings. Here both

the means and the end are the same Knowledge Supreme. All 'doing' is realised as non-different from the 'Being'.

Action or doing is not only bodily but also mental. A thought comes under mental action. To do or not to do is not the question, because there is no choice in this matter. Man is forced to do action by the three gunas of prakriti the sattva, rajas and tamas. He cannot remain for a moment without doing action. But he is given a choice in how to do the action that falls to his lot. He can do it either wisely or foolishly. Doing without the knowledge of the structure of the universe is foolish action which causes bondage; and doing with the knowledge is wise action which helps him to free himself from bondage. So we see that action, in one sense, seems to be the cause for both bondage and its destruction.

A little thought will reveal the most complicated nature of even the simplest of our actions. No action can be traced to any single cause. There will be a never-ending chain of causes and effects behind every action, so much so that it is impossible to pinpoint a particular cause for a particular effect. Every action is a cosmic incident. Some thinkers express this fact by saying that there is no particular cause for anything that happens. Everything just happens, they say. Some others would say that everything is done by God. Still others would say that whatever happens is according to the cosmic plan. The whole universe is His lila, sport-say Brahma Sutras. "lokavat-tu lila-kaivalyam-Creation is a mere sport or pastime for the Creator-God, like what we see in the world in the case of children" (11-1-3). All these mean the same thing.

The universe is an organic whole of which all parts are inextricably inter-connected. There is nothing which can stand separate from or external to this organic structure. Feeling of any kind of difference or distinction in this 'whole' causes a

disturbance in the original equilibrium, which sets up a series of reactions to restore the lost equilibrium, even as a pebble dropped on the calm surface of a lake disturbs the whole lake and a series of ripples in concentric circles is formed to restore the original calmness. Pleasure and pain are the results of the disturbance of the universal harmony by individualistic actions, to bring back the undisturbed harmonious state.

5. Some hints on the Qualifications of a Seeker: The first step to be taken by the spiritual aspirant therefore is to give up the ideas of separation-the feelings of 'I' and 'mine' with their counterparts of 'you' and 'yours', 'he' and 'his', 'this' and 'that' and so on. These should give place to the feeling of universality. This first step itself is very difficult, almost impossible for the average man who is immersed in the sense world. A lot of preliminary preparation is therefore required before one can start real spiritual sadhana. Acquiring of the prescribed four-fold qualifications is a must for all sincere sadhakas. They are (1) proper discrimination between the Real and the unreal-the Absolute and all that is other than It; (2) dispassion born out of such discrimination-a feeling of contentment and satiation in all sense experiences and a conviction that this world cannot give real joy and peace; (3) virtues such as tranquillity of mind, judicious control over the activities of the senses and the organs of action, withdrawal from worldly activities done with attachment and selfish motives, fortitude or power of endurance, unshakable faith in God, guru and scriptures, and one-pointedness of mind on the spiritual Goal-in short, all virtues; and (4) conscious, intense yearning for liberation from samsara-this life of never-ending birth, existence and death. In the language of Ashtanga Yoga of Sage Patanjali, the qualifications constitute the first five limbs of yama, niyama, asana, pranayama and pratyahara which prepare the mind for concentration and meditation. It

may be seen from the scriptures that in ancient days this great Brahma-vidya, knowledge of the was imparted through instructions on Absolute, meditations (vidyas or upasanas) on the cosmic deities. But now we do not grasp the meaning and the methodology of these vidyas or meditations even after hearing or reading them a thousand times and after being instructed by a teacher. Why? Because of lack of the required qualifications in the seekers and the lukewarm aspiration for Liberation in us. The words used in the scriptures for imparting this knowledge appear to be too simple in our view. Still we are unable to get the hidden Truth behind those apparently simple words. The preparatory disciplines that the disciples undergo before initiation are more important than the actual words and other means used in teaching by one's own Master for the transmission of the Supreme Knowledge. The dictionary meanings of the words used by the teacher are of not much use in this context. It is the Soul-force of the teacher that is transferred to the Soul of the disciple through the apparently simple words which carry tremendous spiritual force behind them. A fund of wisdom lies deep within the words.

The Kaivalya-upanishad says: tyagena eke amritatvam-anasuh-Only through renunciation one gets immortality (1-3). This renunciation is not renunciation of the house and family, or for that matter any object or objects constituting this universe. It is the renunciation of the mistaken notion about the universe, the 'I' and God. In ignorance we think that this universe is real as it appears to the senses and the mind, that it is separate from and is outside to one's Self. This erroneous but firm conviction in us should be first replaced by bringing in its opposite-the right conviction that this universe as it appears to the senses and the mind is unreal but real as pure Consciousness, that it is one with the Self, and therefore not different from and outside the Self. Thereafter the mind should

be freed of this conception also. All conceptualisation must cease. This is real renunciation which is effected through the practice of the vidyas or meditations. The same truth is expressed in the Katha-upanishad where it says: "avritta-chakshur- amritatvam-icchan-One who desires immortality should turn his senses and the mind inward" (II-1-i). The scriptures are replete with similar declarations regarding the importance of the qualification of the aspirant taking to the practice of meditation.

To acquire these qualifications is not an easy task. It is not like acquiring university degrees by reading a few books and reproducing them in the examination. To cite a simple instance: take the case of discrimination between right and wrong. There is no absolute right nor absolute wrong. Both are relative concepts and they depend on circumstance, place, time and so many other factors. That which is considered right in a particular country, at a particular time, under a particular circumstance may be wrong when any of them changes. Why speak of different places, times and circumstances? In the same place, at a particular time, under a given condition it is difficult to say whether an action is right or wrong.

There is a very interesting and instructive story on this subject.

Once there were three pious persons leading an ideal life of truth, penance, charity and non-injury. It so happened that all the three left their mortal coils on the same day. Messengers from the heavens came and they were being taken in a divine chariot to the celestial worlds for awarding the fruits of their virtuous actions. The divine vehicle was just rising up from the earth. They saw down below on the earth a snake with a frog in its mouth about to swallow it. One among the three said: "O poor frog, it is being killed by the cruel snake". He sympathised with the frog and thereby sinned against the snake forgetting that the snake was not at fault in taking its legitimate food. For

this sin he fell down from the chariot. The second man seeing this said: "O, the poor snake which has been starving for days, after all, got some food to satisfy its hunger." This remark of his also, though an expression of sympathy for the snake, was sinful because he indirectly approved the killing of the poor frog by the snake. Hence he also fell down from the chariot. The third man, seeing the fate of his two companions, became wise and therefore kept mum. And the story says that he went to the heavens. Every action is like the action of the snake swallowing the frog. The wise sadhaka should transcend the concept of right and wrong in this phenomenal world through wisdom, perfect knowledge of the Cosmic Law which operates.

Similarly, he should go beyond likes and dislikes which arise from the concept of good and bad. Man generally considers some objects as dear and valuable, and hence wants to possess them, nay, hoard them as much as possible. The aspirant after liberation, even in his early stages of sadhana, should realise through wise discrimination the perishable nature of all sense objects. The value that man attaches to objects is a false one due to superimposition by his mind. The object, as it is, is neither valuable nor valueless. Take gold, for example. It is considered to be one among the most valuable objects. This value is nothing but a superimposition of the mind. It is true that all people in all countries make this superimposition. This fact will not make gold 'really' valuable. If suppose all the people and all the governments of the world agree for some reason that from tomorrow onwards gold will have no value, then it loses its value and no one thereafter will desire to hoard that metal. The Bhagavad-gita says that the wise man considers gold, a clod of earth and a piece of stone as of equal value-sama-loshta'sma-kanchanah (XIV-24). It is said Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa during early period of his sadhana practised this. He would keep a piece of gold coin in

one hand and a stone in the other. He would throw away the stone into the Ganga and then the gold coin. A couple, vanaprasthas, leading an ascetic life preparatory to embracing the sannyasa order, were walking in the forest. The husband was walking in front and the wife was following him at a little distance. The husband saw a shining bar of gold on the path. He thought: "If my wife sees this, her mind will be attracted by it. I should not allow this to happen." Thinking thus, he covered it with some mud. The wife, who joined him after a few seconds, had noticed her husband's action. She could fathom the good motive behind his action. She asked her husband: "My dear, why do you cover earth by earth?" Hearing this the husband blushed and understood that while he still had the feeling of difference between gold and earth, his wife was free from it and that she had much more dispassion and equal vision than himself.

All spiritual practices including meditation lead to self-control. The real Self is not in need of any control. It is the lower self-the body-self, the mind-self and intellect-self-that is referred to as the 'self' in the expression 'self-control'. Sense-control and mind-control may be said to be interdependent. Sense-control will not succeed without the co-operation of the mind and mind cannot be quietened as long as senses are extroverted and pulled by their respective objects. Of the five senses, ear, eye, nose, palate and sex, the last two are comparatively difficult to control. The power of attraction these two organs exert on their corresponding objects, and the power of the pull from the side of the objects exercised on these two sense organs, are both very strong. When by some means the aspirants manage to control the other three senses, these two senses get out of their control. It would seem that the three senses, while appearing to have been controlled, might have really gone underground and secretly joined the two senses, the palate

and sex. Between these two, very strong and difficult to subjugate, sex may be said to be stronger than the palate. Those spiritual aspirants who try to control their senses forcibly and suppress them through will power at the very outset without knowing their real strength, without an understanding of their mysterious power and their innate connection with oneself, fail miserably in controlling the sex urge which is really the limited form of the cosmic power behind creation. No amount of physical control will be of any avail here. The sadhaka should resort to sublimation and not suppression. One may think that old age is free from this difficulty. By age we mean age of the present physical gross body. But sense organs do not belong to the gross body. They form part of the subtle body. The subtle body is as old as ignorance which is its cause. Ignorance is beginningless. The difference between the age of the subtle body in a youth and that in an old man is therefore negligible, practically nil. Discriminative knowledge of the nature of the Self and the non-Self is the only sure means for success in sense sublimation. The uphill task in sense control, especially sex control, and the risk of a fall even in the advanced stages of one's spiritual practice, are illustrated in scriptures. The stories of Visvamitra and Menaka, of Jaimini and Vyasa, etc. are to the point. Those who have read Avadhuta-gita of Lord Dattatreya, a superb exposition of the highest state of Consciousness of a realised Soul, would remember how at the very end of the concluding chapter, the Lord deals with the necessity of sex sublimation through self-control. A very apt and telling illustration is given therein:

agni-kunda-sama nari ghrita-kumbha-samo narah,

samsargena viliyeta tasmat-tam parivarjayet.

gaudi madhvi tatha paishti vijneya trividha sura,

chaturthi stri sura jneya yayedam mohitam jagat.

-Herein man and woman are compared to a pot full of ghee and a pit full of blazing fire. Even by nearness to fire, ghee melts and flows into the fire causing the fire to blaze forth more and both get destroyed. Even so, any kind of association of one with the other leads to great downfall, and therefore should be completely avoided. We know three kinds of intoxicants, viz., the spirituous liquors prepared from sugar cane, honey, and wheat or rice flour. But there is another, the fourth, the sex by which the whole world is deluded (VIII-24 and 25). Further expatiation on this would only be superfluous.

6. Direct Realisation: In giving expression to the direct realisation of the supreme Reality which is beyond mind and speech, sages naturally differ in their language and manner of expression. Such differences cannot be avoided because of the unique nature of the Reality which transcends thought and expression. Some would say that one should not think in meditation. Others would at once raise the question: 'If nothing is felt and nothing is thought of, then what exactly is one's experience?' The reply to this would be that there is no experience in meditation in the last stages, because even experience is a function of the mind which involves the triad of experiencer, experience and the experienced which is to be transcended. 'But this is a negative attitude', would be the counter-argument of those who consider that the test of success in meditation is the return from it with a sort of great satisfaction or delight, and that it is not a vacuum or void, and that all our discussion of Truth should not go merely on verbal and logical definitions and conclusions but on practical experience. When the question of 'what happens in deep sleep?' is discussed, the same difficulty arises. Because the discussion is started after waking and not while sleeping. Whether there is or not any trace or seed of ignorance in deep sleep can be answered in both ways according to the

standpoint taken by the one who replies to the question. The questioner and the replier are both in the waking state where it is supposed that ignorance is in its full play. If both are sages who have known the Truth, such questions will not arise at all for discussion. If the replier is a sage and the questioner is a sadhaka, the former is said to come down to the level of the latter who is still in the realm of the mind and speech and give an answer at that level, although from the standpoint of the former he is always established in his own essential nature, the non-dual Absolute.

The sruti is not tired of pointing out the difficulty in explaining It to another. The last word is 'neti, neti' (not this, not this') which is followed by mauna-the 'Great Silence', the Silence referred to in one of the verses in praise of the Supreme in the form of Dakshinamurti:

"chitram vata-taror-mule vriddhah sishyah gurur-yuva,

guros-tu maunam vyakhyanam sishyas-tu chhinna-samsayah"

Lo! A wonder at the foot of that yonder banyan tree! Aged and gray-haired disciples are sitting at the lotus feet of a preceptor who is in the prime of youth, quite contrary to what is generally observed in the world where the disciples are young in age and the preceptor is aged. Again, the exposition given by the preceptor at the foot of the banyan tree is through 'Silence', which also is a strange phenomenon, as the usual custom followed by preceptors is to give eloquent sermons in explaining the scriptures. In spite of the 'silent' teaching of this preceptor, the disciples are completely freed of all doubts and they derive supreme satisfaction. A wonder of wonders indeed". The supreme Truth, Its attainment and Its transmission from the preceptor to the disciple are mysterious and therefore said to be wonderful. The great Preceptor of all preceptors-who is at the root of this big banyan tree of this

universe, who is always young because time does not age Him, being beyond space and time-instructs the highest Knowledge through 'Silence', because It is beyond the realm of thought and speech. He is always instructing remaining in the 'heart' of every being, the root of the banyan tree of life. We do not hear his silent exposition because of the din and uproar caused by the senses. When the senses together with the mind are silenced through meditation, we will hear the silent exposition of the preceptor Dakshinamurti, the supreme Brahman and all doubts will be rent asunder, resulting in aparoksha'nubhuti, Direct Experience. Certainly, a wonder of all wonders!

The Absolute is the Being that is left after the negation of all this, the subject and object conceived of by the mind. It is the limit of all negations as well as affirmations. It is not all this, and yet It is all this, and transcends all this. It is the meditation on this Absolute that one should practise and It is also the end and aim of all meditations. Before one starts this meditation, one should have a firm and full 'understanding' of It which is this Brahma-jnana, knowledge of the Supreme. If 'understanding' or 'knowledge' gives one the final freedom from the miseries of this world, the question of meditation does not arise for him. His knowledge is Meditation and Meditation is Knowledge. The other cases, where the understanding remains at the intellectual level only and has not transcended the intellect, meditation has to be practised till the knots of the heart (avidya, kama and karma) are untied and loosened. The nature of meditation to be practised should be according to one's temperament and the stage of evolution (involution?).

7. Place of meditation in Sadhana: There is a lot of academic discussion, even among the Advaitins, about the place of meditation in the scheme of Self-realisation or the final liberation. Some assert with great force that it is jnana (the

supreme Knowledge) that gives the final blow to the ajnana which is the root-cause of all sufferings and that meditation may help the aspirant in the earlier stages to attain this jnana. Others assert with equal or perhaps greater force that in the vast majority of the aspirants, meditation is inevitable and unavoidable up to the final stage, to attain that supreme Knowledge, and therefore meditation should not be relegated to a subordinate place with reference to Knowledge. To them jnana-yoga and dhyana-yoga are complementary in as much as without dhyana none can practically attain direct Knowledge, aparoksha-jnana which term is a synonym for liberation.

The part played by meditation may be said to be twofold. First in its preliminary stage, it prepares the ground for the dawn of the final illumination, and then it takes the aspirant to the last step in the ladder of spiritual practice in which the unreal ajnana is completely destroyed as it were. This destruction of ajnana is figuratively known as liberation. It depends on the qualifications possessed by the aspirant.

Sri Suresvaracharya in his Naishkarmya-siddhi, II-2 and 3, refers to four classes of aspirants who attain liberation. The first class aspirant attains liberation suddenly by the complete disappearance of the phenomenal world along with its cause, ajnana. The example is Hiranyagarbha, the Cosmic Person. No second example can be cited for reasons obvious. The that Brihadaranyaka-upanishad (1-4-i and ii) says Hiranyagarbha is the first-born who finds nothing besides Himself and whose birth is a perfected one with the knowledge of unity, even without any instruction, due to the result of meditation practised in His previous lives. An effect of ignorance somehow crept in for a moment and it disappeared the next moment due to His knowledge. Under the second class come those who get illumination by merely hearing the

final instruction from the preceptor only once. The example given is that of a ghost which, remaining in the flagpost of Arjuna's chariot in the Mahabharata war, heard the Lord's instruction to Arjuna which forms the immortal Bhagavad-gita, and attained sadyo-mukti, immediate liberation. It is stated that this incident is given in the Jaimini Mahabharata. Under the third class are those who through a process of penance in the form of study and meditation on the instructions given by the preceptor, attain the final saving Knowledge. An example is Bhrigu who heard from his father Varuna that the Supreme is That from which all this appears to emanate into being, in which after emanation appears to exist, and into which in the end appears to get merged; then practised penance and realised the Truth in the end (Taittiriya-upanishad III). The fourth class of aspirants are those who are instructed by the preceptors more than once and who ponder over what they hear and meditate on it and thereby attain the supreme Knowledge. An example of this is Svetaketu who hears the maha-vakya (tat-tvam-asi) nine times from his father-preceptor (Chhandogya-upanishad VI). That the first, third and fourth cases are due to chance and the second involves meditation on the maha-vakya heard from the preceptor, and that meditation signified by the term prasamkhyana is involved in the maha-vakya, is the prima facie view put forth by the Acharya. He transcends this view and arrives at the final conclusion that prasamkhyana is not enjoined in the maha- vakya which at once imparts the final saving Knowledge on the qualified aspirant hearing it from his spiritual preceptor. The Acharya however assigns a place for meditation in the earlier stages of sadhana (Naishkarmya Siddhi III-125).

Now let us see what the great sages Sri Vyasa and Sri Acharya Sankara have to say on this question. In his Brahma Sutras, Vyasa gives his opinion in the aphorisms avrittir-asakrid-

upadesat and lingachchah which literally mean, that repetition is necessary since the Upanishads instruct repeatedly and since there is the indicatory mark (IV-1-i and ii). In his commentary on these Aphorisms, Acharya Sankara reconciles both the views. He refers to the Upanishadic texts: 'The Self, my dear, should be realised-should be heard of, reflected on, and meditated upon' (Brihadaranyaka-upanishad IV-5-vi); 'Knowing about this Self alone, the intelligent aspirant after Brahman should attain intuitive Knowledge; he should not reflect upon many words that are tiring to the organ of speech' (Ibid IV-4-xxi); 'He should be sought, Him one should desire to understand', (Chhandogya-upanishad VIII-7-i); and similar other texts. His arguments and conclusion may be summarised as follows:

Repeated instruction as 'should be heard of, reflected on, and meditated upon' indicates a repetition of the mental act which has to culminate in the intuitive realisation of Brahman. Both the words upasana- continuous meditation, worship and adoration-and nididhyasana (profound meditation) imply acts involving meditation, a repetition of the mental act. The words 'vid' which literally means 'to know' and 'upas' which literally rendered into English would be 'to sit near' or 'to meditate', are seen to be used in the Upanishads interchangeably. Some Upanishadic texts start with 'vid' (Chhandogya-upanishad IV-1-iv) and end with 'upas' (Ibid IV-2-ii). Some others start with 'upas' (Ibid III-18-i) and end with 'vid' (Ibid III-18-iii). Quoting other Upanishadic texts, the Acharya shows that meditation in the form of repeated mental acts is assumed as an established fact. Generally realisation of the Supreme, experience of the identity of Brahman and the Atman, does not result from a single hearing. Repetition of the mental vritti 'I am Brahman' be
after hearing the maha-vakya 'tat-tvam-asi', will unnecessary for one who can realise the Self as Brahman after

hearing the maha-vakya once only. But to one who cannot do so, repetition is necessary as seen in the cases of Svetaketu and Bhrigu cited above. The argument that if the maha-vakya 'tat-tvam-asi' uttered once cannot bring about realisation of its real indicative meaning, then it will not be able to do so even when repeated many times in meditation, is met by the Acharya by replying that though it is a logical argument, nothing is illogical about facts directly perceived. Among the aspirants how many realise the Supreme by hearing the Truth once from the preceptor?-asks the great Acharya. This is ample proof for insisting on meditation on the vast majority for the attainment of the supreme Knowledge which bestows final liberation.

Even in the case of Hiranyagarbha quoted as an example of the first-class aspirant who gets sudden supreme illumination, He must have practised meditation on Hiranyagarbha in his previous incarnation. Scriptures say that one who practises meditation on Hiranyagarbha becomes Hiranyagarbha.

Similarly, in the case of the ghost in the post of Arjuna's chariot,

which was liberated by hearing once the instructions of the Lord, the reasonable presumption is that it would have practised meditation and removed all the obstacles such as ignorance, doubt and confusion, in its previous births.

8. Fruits of meditation: The attainment through the practice of vidyas is said to be identification with the particular deity on whom meditation is practised. It is otherwise called attainment of the worlds of the deities. These are called heavenly worlds. Among these heavenly worlds, there are the lower and the higher worlds. The lower consists of the worlds of the celestials such as Indra, Agni, Vayu, Varuna, etc.-the presiding deities of the elements, who are also said to be the presiding deities in the various limbs in the body of the meditator. These heavenly worlds generally mentioned in the Puranas may be said to be

similar to this sense world, but the joy there is said to be much more in quantity and quality compared to the worldly pleasures. The enjoyment there is without effort, for one is enjoying the fruits of one's meritorious works performed in this world. When this merit gets exhausted, one is born again in this world because of the balance of karma in stock, the sanchita-karma as it is called. The higher, perhaps the highest, heavenly world is that of Hiranyagarbha referred to in the Upanishads. This is attained through meditation on the vital force, mind and intellect in their universal aspects. This world of Hiranyagarbha is said to be free of hunger and thirst, old age and death. One attains this experience through the highest meditation.

The following doubt may arise in the mind of the seekers: The sruti emphatically declares that the Supreme, the non-dual Being, the unmoded Conscious- ness is beyond the reach of speech and mind. It is neither any of the objects known, nor is it the unknown. None of the senses can reach It. It is not anything that people worship and meditate upon. Further, if the seeker thinks or says that he has known Brahman well enough, then he can be certain that he has known very little about It. It is known to him to whom It is unknown; and he to whom It is known does not know (Kenopanishad I and II). Under these conditions, it is impossible to get Brahma-jnana, the Knowledge Supreme. To start meditation the mind requires an object or a concept at least. Since Brahman is attributeless, it is impossible to meditate on It. Thus neither is it possible to get a complete knowledge about the Supreme, which is said to bestow liberation, nor is it possible to meditate on the Supreme.

A flood of light is thrown on this by Sri Swami Vidyaranya in chapter IX dhyana-dipa of his work Panchadasi. He says that all these are not very serious difficulties to a sincere seeker.

Through reasoning and profuse citations from the scriptures he establishes that the spiritual aspirant who has proper discrimination and right dispassion and who has a preceptor, can realise Brahman which is his own Self through knowledge as well as through meditation. He should first have a firm intellectual conviction that Brahman (the Absolute) which the scriptures speak about is and then the conviction that This is his own self. This knowledge got through the study of the scriptures and reflection is indirect knowledge which can be acquired by all, provided they have faith (sraddha) in the scriptures and Masters. What has thus been intellectually ascertained through study, through reasoning and enquiry, has to be realised through deep meditation. As long as the delusion of identifying oneself with the body exists, the seeker cannot become established in the Self. For getting indirect knowledge of the non-dual nature of the Self, perception of duality in the form of this world is no obstruction, even as perception of the blueness in the sky is no obstruction to the knowledge of those who know for certain that the sky is not blue in colour. Enquiry of the supreme Truth never goes in vain. If it does not bear fruit in this birth, it will certainly do in the next or some future birth. The realisation attained by Sage Vamadeva while in the mother's womb (vide Vamadeva-vidya) and Sage Bharata in three births (vide Srimad-Bhagavatam) are only two examples to the point. There are many more. All impediments must be removed before realisation dawns. Binding attachment to sense objects, dullness of the intellect, indulgence in improper and non-scriptural arguments are some of the obstructions which should be removed by the practice of self-control.

9. Meditation and Knowledge: One who cannot practise enquiry on the Self, the Atman-Brahman, should resort to concentration and meditation. As one always thinks on objects one loves and to which one is attached, even so one who has

love for the Supreme Brahman can meditate on Brahman with attributes or without attributes. In meditation the mind takes the form of the object meditated upon. One can start with meditation on the deities and gradually pass on to meditation on Virat, Hiranyagarbha and Isvara, and finally the Supreme as prescribed in the vidyas. Meditation on the idea 'I am beyond speech and mind' will lead one to the final Goal. This pratyaya does not invest the Atman with attributes. The Atman-Brahman is beyond saguna (with attributes) and nirguna (without attributes). He is also neither and at the same time both and transcends all.

While the scriptures say that Brahman or the Atman cannot become an object of knowledge or of meditation, It being the supreme Subject, in the same breath the very same scriptures also declare that It can be known, meditated upon and realised through a purified mind, a mind devoid of desires.

For purposes of meditation all positive qualities attributed to the Absolute such as Bliss, Consciousness, Existence, Infinitude, etc. given in the several Upanishads should be combined. Similarly, if one practises the 'neti, neti' method, one should combine all such negative attributes such as 'not gross', 'not subtle', 'not causal', etc. (Brahma Sutra III-3-xi and xxiii). All attributes and attributelessness are only indications, and therefore neither of them affect adversely the non-dual, absolute nature of the Supreme. Finally leaving off both the presence and absence of attributes, one should meditate: 'That I am', without the notion of externality and universality in regard to 'That' and without the notion of internality and individuality with reference to 'I'.

Supreme Knowledge is vastu-tantra. It depends on Brahman alone and not on the meditator. Such knowledge by its mere the revelation, destroys the nescience responsible for

erroneous notion of the sense of reality in the phenomena. Sravana, manana, and nididhyasana properly practised by a qualified disciple under the guidance of a preceptor cause the dawn of samyag-jnana (knowledge of the Absolute) which none can prevent. The disciple is bestowed with the final Freedom, even if he does not want It. Such Knowledge, by the mere fact of its rising, destroys all ideas of the sense of reality of the world separate from the Self and the aspirant becomes liberated in the present life and awaits wearing out of his fructifying karmas in the form of his body and its cheshtas (involuntary movements).

On the other hand, meditation depends on the aspirant who meditates putting his faith in the instructions of the teacher and the scriptures. He should continue meditation until he realises his identity with the object of meditation and then continue the same thought till death. Meditation is therefore said to be purusha-tantra (dependent on the will of the meditator). He may do it, may not do it or may do it in a different way. A man of meditation performs his worldly duties with a certain amount of indifference, since much concentration on them is likely to affect his meditation adversely.

Sri Sankaracharya, in his introductory remarks to his commentary on the Chhandogya-upanishad, gives the distinction between non-dualistic realisation (Advaita- jnana) and meditation (upasana). He raises the question: Where lies the difference between the two? The answer given by him is: Realisation of the non-dual Absolute, whose very nature transcends all action and inaction, does away with the difference among the falsely superimposed concepts of doership, of instruments of action and also of actions and their results. He cites the example of the rope and snake where a rope is mistaken for a snake in semi-darkness. The right knowledge of the rope dawns when it is illumined by a light

which at once removes the falsely superimposed snake. No meditation on the false snake or on the real rope is involved. Similar is the case with non-dualistic realisation (Advaita-jnana). But as far as meditation (upasana) is concerned, it establishes a continuous flow of similar modification of the mind in relation to some object prescribed in the scriptures, uninterrupted by foreign ideas. This is the difference between the two-says the Acharya. The epithet 'vidya' can mean both the supreme, non-dualistic Knowledge (jnana) and also meditation (upasana).

Again, in his introduction to the commentary on the Brahma Sutras 1-1-xii, the great Acharya makes a distinction between the two and says that Brahman is to be meditated on with the help of Its relation with the limiting adjuncts and known without the help of that relation.

A man of Knowledge who has realised the Reality behind the world-phenomena, fulfils his worldly duties to perfection as they do not come into conflict with his supreme Knowledge. To perform worldly activities, it is not essential that the world should be real as such. Even while one is fully convinced that the world is phenomenal, dream-like, one can perform his allotted duties to perfection with all his senses and mind in full swing, just as an actor in a drama acts his part very well, all the while knowing that it is a piece of false show. To know a pot, the mind need not be controlled. As a pot once known remains always known, Brahman also once 'known' through samyag-jnana remains always 'known', It being one's own self-effulgent Self. From Knowledge alone results complete Freedom, proclaim the scriptures. By the strength of meditation on Brahman, saguna or nirguna, one attains Knowledge which bestows final liberation.

Does a full-blown jnani require meditation to prevent his mind being drawn towards sense objects? No, is the answer, for there is no objection for the Knower to be engaged in them. He knows fully well that they are his own projections, waves of Consciousness. He is above the injunctions of the Vedas in regard to karmas and upasanas which are meant for those who identify themselves with their bodies, their social status and stages in life. He knows that all of them are creations of the illusory power of his mind and that they are related to the body and mind and not to the Self, the pure Consciousness which he really is. A knower of Brahman whose heart is freed of all attachments is a liberated Soul, whether he meditates or not, whether he does action or not. These merely depend on his fructifying karmas that have given birth to his present body which is seen by others. "If one is a knower of Truth, whether he be engaged in constant action or in contemplation, does his mind ever lose the state of samadhi? No, the enlightened ones are forever in samadhi, even though they engage themselves in the affairs of the world"-says the Yoga Vasishtha in its story of Suraghu and Parigha in the Upasama Prakarana. This being the state of a liberated sage, how can another man recognise his real condition? For all outward appearances, he looks like any other man. So it is said by the wise that one should become a Sage oneself before one can judge another whether the latter has realised the Self or not.

To reach the pinnacle of yoga and jnana, a gradation of steps is prescribed. To start with one should restrain from all sinful actions. Leaving off the gross sense life, an animal life of eating, drinking and sleeping, one should engage oneself in good and meritorious actions prescribed in the scriptures. The next higher step is the worship of a personal deity. A still higher step in the gradation is meditation on Hiranyagarbha, the saguna-Brahman. The last step is meditation on the

attributeless Brahman, because It is the nearest to the Absolute. Meditation on the attributeless Brahman results in the dawn of samyag-jnana which is the same as direct realisation of the Self.

How can meditation on personal deities and on saguna-Brahman (Brahman with attributes, such as the concepts of Virat and Hiranyagarbha) and on even the attributeless nirguna-Brahman, help one to attain the Absolute which transcends all characteristics such as 'with attributes' and 'without attributes'? All meditations are within the realm of duality and involve the distinctions of the triad in the form of meditator, meditation and the object of meditation. The Supreme is beyond all dualities and triads. A logical explanation is given by Swami Vidyaranya through the analogy of leading error, samvadi-bhrama. In certain cases a procedure adopted based on an error leads to immense gain, and the error therefore becomes knowledge productive of result. A man sees a ray of light from a distance. He runs to the place from which the light emanates and to his surprise finds a valuable gem. The ray of light is not the gem. He goes along the line of the ray alone, but in the end attains a gem. Another poor man, while walking in the woods, loses a paltry coin. He retraces his way and goes on searching for the coin. And accidentally he gets a treasure. Similarly, meditation on saguna and nirguna Brahman leads the meditator to the Highest, the Absolute, which transcends both saguna and nirguna aspects. All triads merge, the dualities disappear, the subject and object coalesce into the non-dual infinite Being.

Samkhya-yoga'dhigamyam-to be attained by knowledge and meditation, is the Supreme. That Supreme which is reached by the jnanis Knowers is reached also by the yogins who practise meditation. Both samkbya and yoga are one in that both take the practitioner to the ultimate Goal. In meditation on

any object one identifies with the object of meditation. This is what happens in all forms of genuine meditations. What is the objection to presume the same result from the meditation on Brahman with attributes and without The place and purpose of karma, upasana and jnana in the scheme of God-realisation is given in a simple verse in "Vedanta-dindimah" which says:

"karmani chitta-suddhyartham aikagryartham-upasanam,

mokshartham brahma-vijnanam iti vedanta dindimah"

-Karmas (actions) are for purification of the mind, upasana (worship and meditation) for concentration and one-pointedness of the mind and jnana (the Supreme Knowledge of Brahman) for moksha (Liberation)—thus proclaims vedanta with tom-tom".

10. Some help to Aspirants: The Upanishads give a number of meditations. This does not mean that one aspirant should practise all of them. The different meditations are intended for men in different levels of evolution (involution?). The sincere sadhaka should get himself initiated into that particular vidya which is best suited to him by his guru, an adept in that vidya. If the sadhaka himself is not able to choose the best one for him, he should get the guidance of his guru in the matter. The confidence with which the 'Seers' of these meditations tell us about the great efficacy of these vidyas is really marvellous and will certainly create sraddha in the mind of the spiritually hungry aspirants. The modern mind, especially of the younger generation influenced by foreign ideas and ideals, may revolt at the very concept of these meditations. But the faithful few will not find any difficulty in grasping the truth of the statements of the Seers of the Vedic period who have given us these meditations. It is however beyond the ken of the extroverted and the sense-ridden who revel in the filth of the sense objects which are mistaken for sources of pleasure and happiness.

They are ignorant of the truth that the real source of happiness, even the sense-happiness, is not the sense object but one's own Self, the great treasure-house of Bliss, the ocean of Sat-chit-ananda.

The object suggested for meditation in the vidyas is not of much importance. Any object is as good as any other object for the purpose of meditation. It may be as great and vast as Hiranyagarbha and Isvara or as small and limited as the limited space in the physical heart in oneself. It may be on the concept of Brahman Itself or on common, well-known objects like the sun, the directions, the mind, etc. In meditation, one eliminates through his intellect the name and form in the object chosen for meditation. All objects of meditation-really they are only concepts in the mind-shorn of their names and forms, reveal their true nature of Existence-Knowledge- Bliss-Absolute. It is true that scriptures prescribe meditation on concrete objects and also on subtle concepts, easily graspable by the mind, because in the early stages the neophytes will find them easy to contemplate upon. But later on, they have to superimpose on that object or concept chosen for meditation, the characteristics of universality, infinity and eternity which are more approximate to the nature of the Absolute. The secret of all meditations is acquiring one-pointedness of the mind, by collecting all the dissipated rays and concentrating on the chosen object of meditation. As all rivers take you to the ocean, all objects can take you to the Supreme. All roads lead to Rome, goes the common adage. Even so, meditation on any object leads the meditator to the goal of God-Realisation. Every object or concept may be said to be a part of the whole which the Absolute is, although the Absolute is partless and indivisible. When I touch a limb of my friend, I touch my friend. When I touch a bud at the tip end of a small twig in a banyan tree, I am in contact with the whole gigantic tree. In all

meditations, irrespective of the object chosen for meditation, one should hold on to the concept of the 'Whole' which is inclusive of all objects including the particular object of meditation. The mind should not entertain the idea of finitude-limited nature, name, form and other attributes of the object, but cling onto the infinitude of the 'Whole'. The object is only a prop given to the mind to help meditation in the beginning stages. Scriptures sometimes refer to ishta in connection with meditation. This word generally means that which is liked most. But this liking in the case of the object of meditation should not be confused with the sense attachment. It is one's tutelary deity on whose name and form the infinite Existence-Consciousness- Bliss nature of the Absolute is superimposed.

One should practise meditation with unconditioned love for God. Meditation should not be one among the many acts done during the day or night, all of which have some limited purpose to achieve. If one has a similar limited purpose in meditation also, then one cannot achieve success, as God would become inferior to that purpose, an instrument or means to achieve that purpose which has taken the place of the Goal. This mistake should not be committed by the sincere seeker of God. One should not think that after reaching God one will get 'something'. For, then that 'something' becomes more important than God, even if that something be given such names as peace, bliss, freedom from mortality, etc.

The serious students should practise these meditations only under the guidance of their spiritual guru. The necessity of a guru cannot be over-stressed. Even for secular knowledge a teacher is necessary. This is the experience of all. Who has studied arithmetic, geography, science, astronomy and such other objective sciences without the help of a teacher? In all these the subject of study is something objective which the intellect can grasp. But in the case of brahma-vidya Brahman,

which is considered to be the 'object' of knowledge or meditation, can never become an object'. It is not even the subject. It is one's own innermost Self beyond the reach of the intellect and at the same time the infinite, transcendental Absolute beyond the duality of subject and object. How can one get the knowledge of this Supreme without the help of the Master? It is impossible. Here one may raise the question: "How, then, does the Master attain this transcendental knowledge and how does he impart it to the disciple?" It is a mystery. It cannot be explained in words but it does happen. Men do attain this knowledge of Brahman, maybe very rarely. Such rare fortunate souls do impart this Knowledge to their worthy disciples who are rarer still. It is not one man imparting knowledge to another man. It is the Soul of the guru entering the Soul of the disciple. The communication is not through words, although the ground is prepared through the oral instructions of the guru and study of the scriptures. The sincere and earnest disciple should be ready to surrender his ego completely to the guru and make his mind thoroughly empty, when this knowledge flows freely as it were from the guru into the disciple, even as air rushes into a vacuum. If the field to be watered is at a higher level than the tank or reservoir from which water is to flow or if the former is filled with mud and earth, we know water will never flow into it whatever be the effort one puts forth. Therefore the disciple should make complete self-surrender to the Master and merge the mind in its source, when this supreme Knowledge flows freely from the guru. This is the secret of success on the spiritual path.

The disciple should consider his guru as God himself. Once a disciple approached a sage and said: "O holy Master, please accept me as your disciple." The master knowing that the man was not fully mature in mind and was still having great attachment to the sense-world, said: "My dear man, I am willing

to be your guru. I will first tell you who the guru is. Please listen. Guru is Brahma, guru is Vishnu, guru is Siva, guru is everything; He is really the supreme Brahman. Now, are you ready to accept me as your guru?" The man thought for a moment and silently left the place. His ego, which had not been curbed and thinned out, could not accept the above description of the guru. "If the guru is everything, then what am I? Where am I? Am I a non-entity? Am I not the disciple? Have I not at least that place? I can however accept the guru as superior to me. How can he be everything, Brahman himself, whom I am searching for and whom I want to attain. How can this man with a body like mine be Brahman?" Such thoughts that may arise in many of the young seekers are the obstructions for complete surrender to the guru.

There are persons who deny the necessity of a guru.

Scriptures also in certain contexts say that there is neither the guru nor the disciple, neither bondage nor liberation, neither creation nor dissolution, neither an aspirant nor the liberated. These statements of the great ones and the scriptures are not addressed to the neophytes who enter the spiritual path. They describe that ultimate state of realisation of the non-dual Absolute, the state that should be 'reached' or 'attained' by the disciple with the help of the guru and the scriptures. In that Plenum, the Infinite, not only guru and scriptures vanish, but the disciple also vanishes. As long as the disciple is there aspiring for liberation, the guru and scriptures are also there, and must be there to help him to attain his Goal. Even animals and birds can teach the earnest seekers. The guru, who is non-different from God and one's own Self, can appear in any form. In the Chhandogya-upanishad instances are cited where the guru appeared as a bull, fire, a swan and a diver-bird, and instructed the disciples on the higher truths, when their mind

became completely purified and the ego razed to the ground through karma-yoga and service to the guru.

Regarding the final result that accrues from the practice of these vidyas, let us bring to our mind the declarations of Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj (who has brought to light for the modern world, the purest gems from the depths of the ocean of spiritual literature in his innumerable publications in the form of books, booklets, pamphlets and articles in various journals) of the great Acharya Sankara (the greatest expounder of the secret teachings of the scriptures) and of the Vedic Sage Badarayana-also called Vyasa and Krishna Dvaipayana, the celebrated author of the eighteen Puranas, the Mahabharata (the great epic) and the Brahma-Sutras.

Sri Gurudev says: "All the vidyas lead one from the unreal to the Real, from darkness to light, from mortality to Immortality. They lead the Soul from the mula-ajnana to the highest Brahman, either through krama-mukti or sadyo-mukti." Sri Sankaracharya says: "It is a settled matter that those who through perfect Knowledge have dispelled all mental darkness and are devoted to the eternally perfect nirvana do not return. And as those who rely on the Knowledge of saguna-Brahman, in the end have recourse to that nirvana, it follows that they also do not return" (Vide his commentary on Brahma Sutras IV-4-xxii). Sri Vyasa Bhagavan also has come to the conclusion that on the final dissolution of the world of the conditioned Brahman, those who have attained that world through meditation attain along with the Lord of the world, what is higher than that conditioned Brahman i.e. the unconditioned Brahman (Brahma Sutras IV-3-x).

The following mantras should always be kept in mind:

(1) tam yatha yatha upasate tad-eva bhavati-

One becomes just what one contemplates Him to be (Mudgalopanishad-3).

(2) atha khalu kratumayah purushah, yatha kratur-asmin

loke purusho-bhavati tathetah pretya bhavati-

As is one's faith in this world, one becomes such on departing hence, for as is one's faith and determination, such indeed one is (Chhandogya-upanishad III-14-i).

(3) yam yam vapi smaran bhavam

tyajaty-ante kalevaram,

tam tamevaiti kaunteya sada tad-bhava-bhavitah-

O Arjuna, on whatever being (a particular deity) one has his mind (one meditates) at the time of leaving this body, he reaches that being whose thought has been constantly dwelt upon (Bhagavad-gita VIII-6).

(4) mana eva manushyanam karanam

bandha-mokshayoh,

bandhaya vishaya'saktam muktyai nirvishayam smritam

Mind is the cause for both bondage and liberation; the mind attached to objects is in bondage, and the mind which is free of attachment is liberated-this is the declaration (Satyayaniya-upanishad-1).

(5) yam bhavam darsayet yasya tam bhavam

sa tu pasyati;

tam cha'vati sa bhutva'sau tad-grahah samupaiti tam-

Anyone who, following the teacher's instructions, meditates on a particular object, sees that alone. And that too protects him by becoming identified with him. That absorption leads to his Self-identity (Mandukya Karika 11-29).

Those who practise meditation should not forget that the various symbols of Brahman such as Vaisvanara, Virat, sun, ether, prana, mind and so on are props for the mind to lean upon in the early stages. The mind becomes one-pointed and subtle through meditations on such symbols. The ultimate aim and object of all vidyas is the attainment of Brahman, freedom from the thraldom of samsara, the illusion of the world. One has to adore Brahman, the Absolute, in and through the symbols given in the vidyas, at the same time taking care to see that they (the symbols) do not usurp His place. The difference in the vidyas is only from the viewpoint of the difference in the symbols. The Goal, being the Absolute, is the same in all vidyas, whether the meditation is on Brahman with or without attributes or any of His lower manifestations. Attributelessness is also an attribute of Brahman, as already stated. The meditator should avoid the mistake of thinking that his object of meditation and Goal of meditation are different from his Self.

11. A few words about this book: This book 'The Supreme Knowledge' contains one hundred and one vidyas taken from the 12 Upanishads: Isa, Kena, Katha, Prasna, Mundaka, Mandukya, Taittiriya, Aitareya, Chhandogya, Brihadaranyaka, vin Svetasvatarasis and Kaushitaki. It deals with the subject of the Supreme, the Absolute, the Para-Brahman, also referred to by the epithet of the Atman-Brahman. It attempts to present an exposition of the Supreme and to serve as a means to Its realisation, the realisation of all the four human aspirations (1) a righteous living in consonance with dharma, the cosmic law, (2) earning of material wealth, artha, (3) fulfilment of legitimate desires, kama and (4) final Liberation, moksha. By the proper study of the book and grasp of the import thereof, one would realise the Truth and attain liberation, complete freedom from the shackles of this mundane life. The book is intended to be

read and studied by those who have the fourfold qualifications (already mentioned), though not fully, at least to an appreciable degree.

The vidyas taken from each of these Upanishads are grouped under one section. Thus the book contains twelve sections. These vidyas of the Upanishads deal with upasana and jnana. Here we once again give a citation from Sri Sankaracharya, which we have given under Anandamaya-vidya and also in the earlier portion of this Introduction. The great Acharya, the foremost propounder of the Advaita philosophy, in his monumental commentary on the Brahma Sutras, says: "evam-ekam-api brahma'pekshitopadhi-sambandham nirastopadhi-sambandham cha upasyatvena jneyatvena vedanteshu'padisyata iti-The remaining portion of the book is proceeded with in order to show that although Brahman is one, It is spoken of in the Upanishads as either to be meditated on with the help of its relation with limiting adjuncts, or to be known without the help of its relation with the limiting adjuncts" (1-1-xii). The wise say that the Absolute non-dual Brahman is known in two aspects: one as possessed of the limiting adjuncts constituted of all the diversities of the universe, and the other devoid of all conditioning factors and as though opposed to the earlier. That which is considered different from the Absolute is finite and qualified; and that which is different from the finite and qualified, is the Absolute. Hence it is in the state of ignorance of the nature of the Absolute alone that upasana (meditation)-comprising the various objects of meditation with or without ritualistic worship and devotion, all within the range of empirical dealings can come. The meditations contained in this book are conducive to the attainment of one or more of the following results: (1) higher levels of consciousness, (2) gradual liberation through stages and/or immediate liberation, (3) great efficacy of actions, (4)

heavenly worlds and (5) worldly affluence and prosperity. These differences in the results are due to the differences in the quality and nature of meditation. The subject of this book is no doubt rather very difficult and abstruse.

The spiritual sadhaka, whether he be a great king or a poor peasant, at the very outset, realises the utter futility of his daily routine activities to get complete satisfaction from the pleasure or happiness which this world can give. There is in him a yearning for some greater happiness, the existence of which he has come to know from his own experience. In every action, be it small or great, which is followed by a reaction which may be called its fruit or result, he feels a lacuna, something which he lacks, something which he finds eluding his grasp always. His attention is now turned from the name and form of the objects, with which he comes into contact daily to that something which is hidden within and covered by the names and forms. The stories and anecdotes given in some of these vidyas such as Nachiketa-vidya, Bhuma-vidya, Uttama-Purusha-vidya, Satyakama-vidya, Upakosala-vidya etc. are pointers to the necessity of cultivating perfection in ethics and morality, right thinking, sraddha (unflinching faith in the scriptures and Masters) and complete surrender of the ego at the altar of the Almighty Lord. Humility will be the hallmark of such a sadhaka.

The sadhaka has now to discriminate the real 'I' in him and the ego 'I' which masquerades as the former. He starts practising concentration and meditation with the wrong idea or expectation to perceive the real 'I', as he has been perceiving external objects. He sees visions, light, darkness, dream-like states, etc. one after another. This causes confusion. His present attempt is like the attempt of one to see his own eyes, an impossible task indeed for reasons obvious.

An earnest sadhaka, without getting mentally depressed at this stage, gets the help of the Master and realises that the Self can never be perceived as an object by the sense organs and the mind and that he has to experience It as his own innermost Consciousness.

Deep reflection and contemplation coupled with the grace of the Atman, God and guru, take him to the next step wherein he realises that what he has been experiencing all these days are different states of the mind and that what he is seeking is not a state of the mind. He comes to know that restlessness, which he was trying to restrain, is the very nature of the mind. Now all effort ceases. He realises, as it were, the immediacy of the pure Consciousness like a flash of lightning. He is immersed in Bliss, as it were, for a short time. He comes back to world-consciousness and finds himself with his body-mind personality sitting and enjoying the taste of the bliss through the mind.

A desire arises now to go back to that state of quietude to experience the flash of Bliss again. At this stage his guru comes to his help and explains to him that to experience the Bliss, he need not withdraw the mind, because the Consciousness-Bliss is eternal and natural. This instruction of the guru at this stage enters deep in his consciousness, for the ignorance has been almost completely destroyed. He now experiences the same Bliss under all the varying conditions such as waking, dream, sleep, samadhi, etc. He finds that he need not escape from one stage to another to experience this Bliss. The outward and inward flow of the Consciousness (for the mind has now become one with the Consciousness) is allowed to go along its natural course. He realises that the Self is attainable neither by withdrawal nor by externalisation and that he need not put forth effort for either. He experiences the eternal, timeless present, which includes and at the same time

excludes the presence and absence of all the so-called limiting adjuncts and their relations. Is this the result of upasana or jnana? Has it been gradual or sudden, mediate or immediate? All such academical questions and their intellectual answers no more cause any disturbance in him. He is Peace, Bliss (Santih).

Whether he is meditating or attending to the so-called secular duties, he is one with the Self. Before this realisation he was making a difference between spiritual practices and secular activities, treating the latter as non-spiritual. Even in the former (the spiritual practices) he was not having complete peace, for when worldly thoughts (thoughts other than that of God) appeared, he was disturbed. He used to become restless. He used to curse himself for his failure in meditation. He was thinking that during the period of, say, half an hour or sometimes more, his mind should be on God and God alone, in the form of his tutelary deity, a personal God. But now he realises that God being omnipresent-present everywhere like the thread in the cloth, the gold in the bangle is present in all others thoughts also when they appear during his meditation. He now sees those thoughts as non-different from the thought of God, nay, non-different from God, the Self. He realises that every thought is a manifestation of God. When a thought other than that of God arises in his mind during his meditation, be it the so-called good thought or evil thought, he recognises it as the manifestation of God. He says to himself: "O God, I now know that it is You who are appearing as these thoughts. You can no more deceive me. You can appear in any form, any name, any thought, any action, any object or being. I will see You only in the all." When the mind sinks and a blank or void appears, then also he recognises the Self in that blank or void. He is not disturbed at all by anything. Meditation now becomes easy, effortless, strainless, and natural. He feels that he is in

meditation not only during the fixed hours when he is meditating in his meditation room, but also at all other times during the whole day and night.

12. Conclusion: To summarise, the goal of all meditation is the attainment of supreme Knowledge by which one is freed from the pains and miseries of worldly life. This Knowledge is not dependent on anything external or internal. It is eternal, is beyond definition and description, and manifests itself when itself when objective knowledge is transcended. And this happens when there is full awakening which brings about that Supreme state of Peace transcendental. What exactly is the nature of the division between knowledge and the object of knowing in the case of objective knowledge? The reply is that there is really no division. But how is it that we are feeling the existence of such a division? It is due to the deluded belief that there is something other than Knowledge or Consciousness outside Itself. In fact, there is nothing either inside or outside. This so-called cosmos has not, in fact, come into being distinct from Consciousness. If any one experiences a world separate from Consciousness, let him know that it is unreal, even as the dream-world, mirage water, a second moon and castles in the air are unreal, although they are perceived. After cosmic dissolution and before creation, there can only be the Supreme Peace known through such names as Brahman, the Atman, the Absolute, the Infinite, the Plenum and so on, and in It there cannot exist a cause for creation for reasons obvious. And in the absence of a cause for creation, there cannot be an effect called the world. Thus is established that there is no real 'creation' in the ordinary sense of the term.

But all see the world. The Knowers of the Truth are in the

world.

Why don't we consider the eternal Brahman as the cause of this world? Some scriptures also say so. The reply is that whatever there is in the cause, that alone is found in the effect.

A cloth is not found in a pot, because cloth is not the cause of the pot. Clay alone is found in the pot, because clay is the cause of the pot. Going a little deeper into this cause-effect relationship, we find that there is nothing other than the cause, which is the clay, in the effect which is the pot. The pot does not really exist other than and different from clay in all the three periods of time-in the past before the appearance of the name and form of the pot, in the present when the name and form of the pot appear to exist, and in the future when the pot is broken and they are no more. So where is the question of a cause called clay and an effect called pot! Even so, before the so-called creation of the universe, there could have been only the Supreme, non-dual Brahman. How can an entity called 'cause' exist then distinct from Brahman? Not even a super-intellect can posit a cause in that non-dual Brahman before creation, since the very concept of 'cause' is a part of the universe which has not been created then. Hence Brahman cannot be said to be the cause of the universe really. If anyone asks, "Why not assume that this universe exists in an unmanifested state in Brahman before creation and becomes manifested at the time of creation?", we have to put the counter question: "Who has experienced the truth of this assumption of his and why does he repose faith in such speculations?" If he still persists and says that this real and material world experienced by everyone cannot obviously spring up from void, then he must be told: "Yes, the world is nothing but He, the pure Consciousness. Attempt has been made to bring out this Supreme Knowledge while dealing with many of the vidyas.

If pure Consciousness alone is, then how has the illusion of the world arisen? It has not arisen for want of a cause as already stated. The truth is that the Self itself thinks as it were of Itself as the subject, and expresses Itself as it were as the objects of perception. Therefore all this is but Consciousness and naught

else. The immature aspirant may again raise the doubt as to how the Supreme Lord (Brahman, the Pure Consciousness) can become the inert and unreal objects of the world. He must be again told that the Lord who is pure Consciousness has not become this world, as the latter does not really exist separate from the former.

How does the ego of the aspirant arise and experience this world? The ego has not arisen and hence there is no one to experience a world which is not there other than consciousness; nor is there any illusion. The 'I', 'you' and all the rest is one infinite Consciousness. In the absence of a cause for this world, one should stop enquiring about it. All confusion about cause and effect also will cease. There is no confusion really, since Consciousness alone exists. 'Contemplation' and 'non-contemplation', the 'teacher' and the 'pupil' are Consciousness alone existing in Consciousness. In the absence of 'diversity', there is no 'oneness' either. In the absence of 'duality', there is no 'non-duality' also. There is no object or concept independent of Consciousness. Even ignorance, bondage and awakening or enlightenment have no existence apart from pure Consciousness. Knowing and realising this is 'awakening'. Just as a nightmare causes sorrow while it lasts and both cease when one wakes up, even so the perception of world-illusion causes illusory sorrow and both vanish when one is 'awakened' by this Supreme Knowledge. In the vision of such an awakened person the unreal world-appearance has the character of a notion of a painting on the wall which has been almost washed away by rain. That hazy notion also fades away soon and he becomes totally free from all conditioning, limitation and fragmentation of Consciousness. He-the 'Whole', the Infinite-experiences as it were the 'Whole' as the 'Whole', the 'Infinite' as the 'Infinite'.

The conditioning and limitation have gained deep root in man because of having been revived in so many past lives. But they can be rooted out by realisation of the truth that all objects exist in the infinite Consciousness as perverted notions. Thus through the practice of the vidyas, the rotation of the wheel of the repetitive birth and death can be stopped. It is pure Consciousness that shines as memory of the past experiences, as present experiences and as future hopes and fears. The mind is non-different from Consciousness. There is naught else. Hence there is no creation really as one thinks in the state of ignorance. The world is really one's Self, the pure Consciousness. The cause for this world attributed to Brahman, is as unreal as the cause attributed to the crow for the fall of the palm-fruit in the popular maxim known as kaka-taliya-nyaya (the maxim of crow and palm-fruit). A ripe palm-fruit fell when a crow perched on a palm tree and the cause of the fall of the fruit was attributed to the perching of the crow. This cause is unreal, as the fruit would have fallen at that very moment even if the crow had not sat on the tree, because it was so ripe that it got itself separated from its stalk at that very moment. The Truth is that Consciousness shines as the three-the subject, object and the experiencing.

The practice of meditation on the lines indicated in the Upanishads by an earnest, qualified seeker, after initiation by his spiritual Master, will result in the attainment of Supreme Knowledge. His final realisation is that this universe of space, time and causation is even now Perfection itself, the Absolute Itself. It has been so forever and will be so forever. In devotional language we say God has created this world. God being Perfection, His creation also cannot but be Perfection.

We conclude this introduction with the nature of that Supreme state which the meditator attains as it were in the end, as given expression to by Sage Vasishtha: "prabuddhasyaiva ya

pumsah sila-jathara-vat-sthitih, santau vyavahritau va'pi sa'mala muktatochyate-That state in which the enlightened one exists as if he lives in the very bowels of a rock, whether he is alone and at rest or engaged in diverse activities-that is the state of purity and that is Liberation"-[Yoga Vasishtha VI (2)-195-iv]. We live in that though we are constantly engaged in diverse activities-says the Sage.

The ego 'I' and the Supreme Consciousness cannot co-exist as two real entities. The former is completely wound up, burnt to ashes, not even ashes, to nothing as it were by the latter. To put it in slightly different words the dross of the ego, the cause of samsara, is burnt by the fire of wisdom into the pure gold of Awareness. Along with it goes its effect, the whole universe which is known as samsara, the repetitive birth and death, change and decay, by revealing its real nature of pure Awareness. One moment of this supreme Awareness breaks the chain of samsara once for all. This is poetically put in a famous verse which says:

snatam tena samastha-tirtha-nichaya dattam mahi-mandalam,

viprebhyah pitr-devatas-suraganas-sarvepi santarpitah;

japta mantra-sahasra-kotir-amuna taptam cha tivram tapo,

yasya brahma-vicharane kshanam-api prapnoti sthairyam manah.

For purification of the mind and final emancipation scriptures prescribe a number of pious and meritorious acts such as baths in holy rivers, performance of charities and sacrifices, worship of God and so on. This verse says that, that rare soul whose mind gets firmly fixed in that pure Awareness even for a kshana (equal to 4/5 % of a second), through deep reflection and meditation on Brahman, attains the result which is greater than what one gets through holy baths in all the sacred waters,

through offering in charity the wealth of the whole world to pious and worthy souls, through propitiation of all the manes, gods and the hosts of celestials by offering libation of water, performing sacrifices and other rituals, through chanting of the holy mantras billions of times and through hard penance practised for a long periods, all put together.

"Om Tat Sat"

THE QUINTESSENCE OF SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

(The Sadhana Panchaka-Five Verses on Spiritual Practice-of Sri Sankaracharya)

Sri Sankaracharya,thegreatestexponentoftheAdvaita Philosophy, hasinfiveshortversesgiventheessenceof spiritual practiceforthebenefitofthoseseekerswhoare treading the path.

There is a storyprevalentamongasectionofthepeopleabout the compositionofthispoembytheAcharya.Itissaidthat some of his closedisciplesweresittingaroundhimjustbefore his Mahasamadhi.Oneofthemaddressedhim:"OBhagavan, you have giventotheworldvoluminouscommentariesonthe Bhagavadgita,theUpanishadsandtheBrahmaSutras,asalso several PrakaranaGranthasandStotrasaboutalmostall deities. In thedaystocome,whenmenbecomeweakintheir understandingandcapacitytograsptherealimportofthe scriptures, aspirantsofmediocreintellecttreadingthespiritual path would finditextremelydifficultandalmostimpossibleto read and digestalltheseworks.Kindlythereforecondescend to give to theworldforthehelpofsuchspiritualseekers,ina nutshell, whattheyshoulddotoattainthesummumbonumof life." In reply,thegreatAcharyaissaidtohavegiventhesefive short verses,asSadhanaPanchaka,whichcontaintheknown quintessence of spiritual practice.

वेदो तनय्धीयतां तदुहुदतं ंकिमयवनुषुठीयतां

तेनेशेमय ववधीयतापगचततः काम्प्येततम्यज्यति् ्।

पापौघः पररधूयतां भवसिु दोषोऽनुसुन्धीयता-

ंिच्छा व्यवसीयतां तनजगृात्तूणूं ंववतनगम्प्ययति् ्॥

Vedo-nityam-adhiyatam

taduditam karmasvanushthiyatam,

Tenesasya vidhiyatam-apachitih kamye matistyajyatam;

Papaughah paridhuyatam bhavasukhe

dosho'nusandhiyatam,

Atmeccha vyavasiyatam nijagrihat turnam vinirgamyatam.

This beginning verse contains instructions regarding what the aspirant should do while leading his normal life remaining in his own house. This stage is preparatory to entering the spiritual path-a stage when the aspirant attunes his whole personality-body, organs of sense and action, mind and intellect-with the Spirit within.

a) "Vedo-nityam-adhiyatam-Let the scriptures be bns

absreinsquent studied daily."

The scriptures referred to here are Moksha Shastras, i.e., the scriptures dealing with the subject of Moksha (Liberation) like the Upanishads, the Gita, the Brahma Sutras, the commentaries thereon, the Prakarana Granthas on the subject,--treatises dealing exclusively on Liberation, literature on Yoga and Bhakti, etc. The aspirant should make a selection according to his temperament. Mere reading of the texts without diving deep into their meanings and import which always lie hidden in them, may not yield full benefit. Not that reading alone is completely useless, it has its own benefits; but reading combined with reflection on the meaning, will hasten the progress to a very great extent. The study should be a regular, daily routine item of the Sadhana. There should not be any interruption. To have a fixed time every day is very beneficial. This item of Sadhana is called Svadhyaya which also means study of one's own Atman-the Self.

b) "Taduditam karmasvanushthiyatam-Let those Karmas

enjoined in the scriptures be well performed.

Scriptures classify Karmas into Nitya and Naimittika, Kamya and Pratishiddha-obligatory Karmas performed daily and on special occasions, those performed for fulfilment of desires and prohibited sinful ones. Leaving out completely the last category of prohibited Karmas, the spiritual aspirant is enjoined to perform the other two kinds of Karmas. Karmas also may include the daily activities one does for the continuance of his life's journey. Whatever one does, whether ritualistic or secular, should be dedicated to God. The performance of Karmas is to be converted into Karma Yoga which purifies the mind and prepares the ground for the descent of the Divine Light.

c) "Tenesasya vidhiyatam apachitih- Through the practice of Karma let God be worshipped."

Dedication of all actions together with their fruits to God is the best form of His Puja or worship. The ritualistic Puja with flowers, fruits, etc., is not excluded. Even that is to be done in the spirit of Karma Yoga, with the only desire for the final fruit of God-realisation.

d) "Kamye matistyajyatam-Let the mind be taken away from desire-engendered actions."

The next step is to detach the mind from those actions performed for fulfilment of mundane desires. On no account should the spiritual aspirant start a Karma with desire to get something worldly. Even sacrifices leading to heavenly worlds are not to be performed with the desire for those worlds. Results of Karmas including heavenly worlds are only transient and are incapable of yielding eternal peace. Desire for everything except the attainment of the Supreme Atman, should be eliminated from the mind. Only a desire-free mind will reflect the Atman. Therefore, the aspirant is directed to avoid all desire-engendered actions and to restrict himself to

the performance of the obligatory Karmas alone which are generally considered as not productive of any merit and the non-performance of which would result in sin. But the Acharya is of the view that the obligatory Karmas also are productive of results, for they bring about the purification of the mind and prevent sin resulting from their non-performance, and that therefore they should also be performed without attachment either to them or their results.

e) "Papaughah paridhuyatam-Let all sins be destroyed.

The aspirant is instructed to destroy all sins. This is done either by expiatory rites prescribed in the scriptures or by actual experience of the fruits of the sinful actions. The sins already committed which fructify in the present life can be nullified by these two methods. Further accumulation of sins should be prevented by doing actions without attachment to their fruits and by dedicating them to God.

f) "Bhavasukhe dosho'nusandhiyatam-Let the aspirant enquire into the defects and imperfections of the pleasures of this transmigratory life."

The Acharya exhorts the aspirant after liberation in the beginning stages of his practice, to make a thorough investigation into the ephemeral and deceptive nature of the sense-pleasures. This investigation, if made following the method prescribed in the scriptures, will convince him of their false, tantalising nature. Pleasure, supposed to be obtained from objects, is only a titillation of the nerves. All sense-pleasures are immediately followed by pain alone. When one is convinced of this fact, one's mind will no longer be attracted by sense-pleasures either of this world or the heavenly worlds and as a result he will be able to pursue his spiritual practice without much hindrance.

g) "Atmeccha vyavasiyatam-Let a firm resolve be made to attain the Atman."

A burning aspiration to realise the Atman in this very life is an unavoidable desideratum for a spiritual seeker. Spiritual life should not be resorted to as a change from the boredom of the stereotyped routine worldly life. It is not like going to a hill-station to spend the summer vacation. A complete turning away from the sense-world is a prerequisite for the dawn of this yearning for Liberation which is called Mumukshutva.

eamid

h) "Nijagrihat-turnam vinirgamyatam-Let him leave his own house immediately."

A sincere student of the university finds hostel life more conducive than a life in his own home for his studies, because in the former he is able to spend more time for studies in a favourable atmosphere with the colleagues and professors. In his own home the student is beset with so many distractions which act as obstacles in the execution of his college studies. Even so, to the neophyte treading the spiritual path, living away from his own house, will greatly help him to avoid distractions. For a spiritual seeker, obstacles in the form of temptations in the house are a thousand times greater than those of a student. Hence, renunciation of one's own home and one's kith and kin is insisted on for a seeker during this period of his Sadhana.

सङ्ग ससु ववधीयतां भगवतो भस्क्तददृडढा धीयतां

शान्याहदः पररचीयतां दृढतरं किाशुय ु सन्यज्यति् ् । सद्ववद्वानुपसप्यतयां

रततहदनं तप्ादुकुा सेव्यतां ब्रह्ौकिारिथ्यतयां शुरुततसशरोवाक्यं सिाकण्यतयि्॥ ्

Sangah satsu vidhiyatam bhagavato bhaktir dridha dhiyatam,

Santyadih parichiyatam dridhataram karmasu santyajyatam

Sadvidvan upasarpyatam pratidinam tatpaduka sevyatam,

Brahmaikaksharamarthyatam srutisirovakyam samakarnyatam.

This verse contains instructions about what the seeker should do after leaving the house till he gets himself initiated by his own Guru.

a) "Sangah satsu vidhiyatam-Let him resort to Satsanga-company of the wise."

One of the most helpful Sadhanas for a spiritual aspirant is contact with the wise-the Srotriya Brahmanishthas--those who are well-versed in the scriptures and always fixed in Brahmic consciousness. Sat means Existence- Absolute, which is also Consciousness-Absolute and Bliss-Absolute. Satsanga, therefore, would mean keeping the mind always in one's own Atman. It also means the company of the learned saints and sages, because their company would always be conducive to keep the mind away from 'worldly thoughts and absorbed in thoughts about God.

b) "Bhagavato bhaktir-dridha dhiyatam- Let him have unswerving and firm devotion to God."

This is a natural consequence that follows Satsanga. Company of great saints will kindle the fire of devotion to God as the omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent Being, the instrumental and material cause of creation, preservation and destruction of the universe. The aspirant should have Sraddha--complete unflinching faith in God-so that his ego may get thinned out. To everything including success in his spiritual practice, he now depends on God and God alone. The Acharya in his Vivekachudamani defines Bhakti (devotion) as seeking

after one's real nature (Sva-svarupa-anusandhanam) and Sri Sandilya in his Bhakti Sutras defines this word as extreme attachment to Isvara, the Lord. On a little reflection one understands that there is not much difference between the two definitions.

c) "Santyadih parichiyatam dridhataram- Let the qualities like, Santi, Danti, etc., be practised firmly."

The aspirant is exhorted to possess the Shatsampat which includes Sama, Dama, Uparati, Titiksha, Sraddha and Samadhana--tranquillity of mind, self-restraint or control of the senses, cessation from all worldly activities, fortitude or power of endurance, faith in God, Guru, the scriptures and the Atman, and concentration or one-pointedness of mind on the Atman.

d) "Karmasu santyajyatam-Let him renounce all Karmas immediately."

The aspirant who has been following the above-said instructions for a pretty long time without interruption, is now instructed to renounce all Karmas. A full-time aspirant who has already left his own home and has been engaging in the study of scriptures, doing the obligatory Karmas, worshipping God with devotion, attending Satsangas, practising the Shat-Sampat with earnest aspiration for Liberation and who is well-advanced in these practices, is now instructed to renounce all Karmas so that he may become qualified to take the next great step forward in his march which marks a definite turning point in his life. The question of renunciation of all Karmas is a very intricate one about which there is difference of opinion among the several schools of philosophy. Lord Krishna in His immortal Song, the Bhagavad-Gita, has clarified the position. The eighteenth chapter opens with Arjuna's question about the truth of Sannyasa and Tyaga (renunciation of all Karmas and abandonment of fruits of Karmas) and the Lord's reply thereto

is contained in the next eleven verses. These verses admit of different interpretations and hence the Acharya in his commentary on them has given his view best suited to Spiritual Sadhakas especially those following the path of Knowledge (Jnana Marga). The spiritual aspirants, according to the Acharya, should perform their allotted Karmas without desire for their fruits. What is to be renounced by them is attachment to Karma as well as its result. Inaction on the part of the aspirant is discouraged completely.

e) "Sadvidvan-upasarpyatam-Let him approach a wise sage."

The next step in the aspirant's march should be to approach a proper preceptor. Till now, he has been practising the Sadhana enumerated above with the help of the scriptures and the company of the wise in general, and as a result, he is now possessed of the Sadhana Chatushtaya--the four unavoidable qualifications of a spiritual aspirant, viz., discrimination between the Real and the unreal, dispassion or absence of desire for the pleasures of this world as well as heavenly worlds, the six items referred to in No. II-c above, and an earnest aspiration for Liberation from the cycle of metempsychoses. He has now become qualified to approach his Guru. The Acharya indirectly hints that one who goes to a Guru for initiation before acquiring all the above said qualifications will have to face only disappointment.

f) "Pratidinam tatpaduka sevyatam-Let him adore his sandals (feet) daily."

Having approached the Guru what should the aspirant do?

This is laid down in the half line of this second verse. Let the aspirant serve the Guru daily till he (the Guru) is pleased with him. The service of one's own Guru is the most important Sadhana which prepares the disciple to receive initiation. It is a colossal misunderstanding that prevails among some that

the service of one's Guru is insisted on for the benefit of the Guru. We worship God for our good and for our prosperity and spiritual evolution. God is not in any way profited by our worship. Nor does He lose anything by our not worshipping Him. Similar is the case with the Guru, whose worship and adoration help the aspirant to liquidate his Samskaras lying buried in the depths of his mind in the subconscious and unconscious levels. The scriptures are full of lives of Spiritual Sadhakas, like Satyakama- Jabala, Indra, etc., referred to in the Chhandogya Upanishad, who were tested very severely by their Gurus before giving initiation. The severity of the tests will depend upon the past sins of the disciple, which have to be liquidated. The disciple who comes out successful in these tests alone is fully qualified to get himself initiated into the mysteries of the Supreme Being.

g) "Brahmaikaksharam arthyatam-Let him enquire about the one indestructible Brahman."

When the Guru is pleased with the service of the disciple, the latter should with great humility enquire about the means of liberation from the bondage of this mundane life. He should pray to the Guru for being instructed about the Atman-Brahman. The relationship between Guru and Sishya-spiritual preceptor and the disciple is a mysterious and unique one. The disciple should free his mind of all prejudices and preconceived ideas about his learning and achievements. He should unlearn, as it were, all that he has learnt so far and await the instruction from the Guru. The pot should be emptied before being dipped into the river to take water. Even so, the disciple should empty his mind before sitting at the lotus-feet of the Guru to receive the initiation.

h) "Sruti-siro-vakyam samakarnyatam-Lethimhearwithfull faith and devotion the Mahavakyaswhicharethequintessence of the Vedas."

To the qualified disciplewhohasthusapproachedhimand who has his mindpurifiedthroughserviceofhisfeetfor sufficiently long period,theGurugivestheSannyasaDiksha and initiation into theMahavakyas-thegreatsentencesordicta of the Upanishads-whichthroughtheirimpliedmeaning establish the Atman-Brahmanidentity.Therearesеveral Maha Vakyas in theUpanishadsofwhichfourareconsidered to be the prominentones.Theyare:PrajnanamBrahmainthe Aitareya UpanishadoftheRig-Veda,AhamBrahmasmiinthe BrihadaranyakaUpanishadoftheYajur-Veda,TatTvamAsiin the ChhandogyaUpanishadoftheSamaVedaandAyam Atma BrahmaintheMandukyaUpanishadoftheAtharva Veda. The SadhakaisnowaVividishaSannyasin-amonk engaging himselfwholetimeindeepreflectionandprofound meditation. BeingpossessedoftheSadhana-Chatushtayaand having undergonethepreliminarypracticesdetailedabove,he is able to leaveofftheliteralmeaningoftheseMahaVakyas and grasp theirimpliedmeaningthroughtheJahad-ajahat Lakshana. ThisiscalledSravana(hearing).Merehearingof the Vedic dictawillhavenoeffectononewhoisnotproperly qualified anddulyinitiated.Sravanaishearing,fromhisown with Guru, of the Mahavakya by a qualified aspirant understanding of its import.

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वाक्याथश्यच ववचायतयां शुरुततसशरः पिः सिाश्रीयतां

दुमुतकाय्सुववरम्प्यतां शुरुततितमतकोऽनुसुन्धीयति् ।

ब्रह्मैवास्मि ववभाव्यतितारिगवयःय परर्यज्यतां

दिऽम्पि्तितरुज्यतांबुधजनैवादयः परर्यज्यति् ॥
Vakyarthaschavicharyatamsruti-sirah-pakshah samasriyatam,

Dustarkat-suviramyatam srutimatas- ain noilo tarko'nusandhiyatam;

Brahmaivasmi vibhavyatam aharahar garvah parityajyatam,

Dehehammatir-ujjhyatam budha-janair-vadah parityajyatam.

This is an exposition on Manana and Nididhyasana to be practised by the Sadhaka till he gets over the idea of 'I am the body' and gets fixed in Brahmakara Vritti-the firm conviction 'I am Brahman.'

a) "Vakyarthascha vicharyatam-Let the implied meaning of the great sentences be reflected upon."

After Sravana the next stage is Manana i.e.,

pondering on the import of the Mahavakyas. The Sadhaka should reflect over the meaning of the dictum he has heard from the Guru. During this process of ratiocination, several doubts may arise in his mind, because he has only intellectually grasped the meaning. The knowledge obtained is only indirect and not direct. Till direct knowledge of the Atman-Brahman-identity which is the import of the Maha Vakyas, dawns on him, he will be haunted by various doubts. The scriptures and the Guru's further personal instructions should be strictly adhered to in the process of ratiocination. Arguments in favour of the implied meaning of the dicta alone should be resorted to. The disciple should not enter into vain arguments or into those which are not traditionally accepted by the wise and the scriptures.

b) "Sruti-sirah-pakshah samasriyatam-Let him resort to the Upanishads completely."

Hereafter, the Sannyasin should resort to the Upanishads alone. All his thoughts should be centred round them. From the time of rising from the bed till he goes to bed again at night, his mind should be engaged in reflection. This would certainly dispel all his doubts. He should not depend now on those texts in the Vedas dealing with Karma and Upasana which have to be treated as subordinate or subservient to the Mahavakyas. All those portions of the Sruti have served their purpose as far as this aspirant is concerned and have therefore to be set aside.

c) "Dustarkat-suviramyatam-Let him completely desist from all unnecessary argumentation.

Mere dialectic disputation and scholastic discussions should be avoided by the aspirant. He should also refrain from entering into discussions with those belonging to other philosophical schools, for they involve the risk of his faith being shaken violently.

d) "Srutimatastarko'nusandhiyatam-Let him always engage in the investigation and enquiry on the lines of the arguments of the Sruti."

The Sruti is interested only in the Atman- Brahman-identity which fact is established through the Shat-Tatparya Lingas-the six tests for ascertaining the meaning of scriptural texts. They are the Upakarma-Upasamhara (introduction and conclusion), Abhyasa (repetition of the topic at intervals), Apurvata (originality in the teaching), Phala (result achieved from it), Arthavada (eulogy) and Upapatti (demonstration through reasoning). It is an accepted principle that the intended meaning of a scriptural text should satisfy one or more of these six tests. Here, in the case of the Mahavakyas, they satisfy all the six tests as may be seen from the sixth chapter of the Chhandogya Upanishad.

e) "Brahmaivasmi vibhavyatam aharahah- Let him always entertain the Bhavana--the inner feeling-'I am Brahman'."

Having cleared all doubts and come to the unshakable conclusion on the implied meaning of the Upanishadic propositions, the Sannyasin is instructed to keep the consciousness I am Brahman' uninterruptedly like the continuous flow of oil from one vessel to another. The 'I' gradually drops off. It merges in Brahman. This is called Badha-Samanadhikarana in the Vedantic parlance. The aspirant has through the process of Anvaya and Vyatireka (synthesis and analysis) discriminated the Atman and not-Atman in the earlier stages of his Sadhana and has through the Neti, Neti (not this, not this) doctrine (given in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad) eliminated everything in the Samashti (the universal or macrocosm including its final constituents of the five subtle elements beginning from earth and ending with ether) and everything in the Vyashti (the individual or microcosm beginning from the gross body up to the intellect and also the ego, with the organs, Pranas and the mind in between). After this elimination he is face to face with the Unmanifested (Isvara) in the macrocosm which is the Prajna (the individual in the causal or deep sleep state) in the microcosm. Really there is no distinction between the microcosm and macrocosm because the latter is inclusive of the former. Without allowing him to slip into a state of Sunyata-complete non-existence of Nihilists-, the Mahavakyas save him and take him to the final state of Brahmic consciousness.

f) "Garvah parityajyatam-Let the Sannyasin renounce the feeling of pride and arrogance."

Let him not have the feeling of superiority complex, for it is sure to drag him down from the spiritual heights to which he has risen through Brahma-Bhavana. The thought 'I am spiritually

advanced, others are still worldly' should never rise in him. Because such thoughts are contrary to facts from the view point of the absolute to which he is moving. In the final state described by the Mantra Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma- everything here is verily Brahman, the pure undivided Consciousness', where is the justification for the feelings of 'I', 'you' or `he'! In the absence of these how can there be pride and haughtiness! To reach this highest state the Acharya asks the Sadhaka to practise consciously absence of pride.

g) "Dehe-ahammatir-ujjhyatam-Let the feeling I am the body' be given up."

The root cause of sufferings is the feeling 'I am this body'. This idea is so dee-prooted as a result of the mutual superimposition of the characteristics of the body on the Atman and those of the Atman on the body. All spiritual practices are aimed at the removal of this false superimposition. But this cannot be done so easily as it is the effect of beginningless Ajnana and it will die only when the Ajnana is destroyed. Ajnana is destroyed only through Samyag-Jnana-the knowledge of Aham Brahmasmi. When this knowledge takes firm root in the Sadhaka, the Ajnana in the form of `I am the body' will disappear.

h) "Budha-janair-vadah parityajyatam-Let him completely give up arguments with the learned."

When the Sadhaka thus progresses in the spiritual path, he realises the real cause of human suffering in this world. He himself, as a result of his Sadhana, begins to have glimpses of the Reality which give him the Supreme Peace. He now wants to share this with others and with this good intention he starts preaching, Yoga and Vedanta. In the course of this work done with the best of intentions he may, without himself knowing it, entangle himself in fruitless arguments with the learned and

the wise. Reality Absolute is beyond Sat, Asat and Sadasat- existence, non-existence and existence-cum- non-existence. It is neither non-dual, nor dual, nor a combination of both. At the same time, being immanent, It includes all these and yet remains transcending all. It is beyond all words and thoughts. Hence, when one tries to explain it to others he has necessarily to come down from the level of Absolute Reality to the realm of relative reality or the not-Atman. In this realm of not-Atman there can be no end to arguments, for all arguments depend on the ever-changing intellect. Therefore, the Sadhaka, even though he has reached a high stage in spiritual evolution, is warned not to enter into arguments with the learned.

IV

ुदिव्यागधश्च गचकक्मयतां रततहदनं ं सभिौषधं भुज्यतां ं मवाद्धन्नं ं न तु याचयतां ववगधवशाराप्तेने सन्तुष्यतिा् ्। शीतोष्णाहद ववषह्यतां न तु ु वृथा वाक्यं सिुचुचायतया-
ीदिासीन्यिेभीप्मयतां जनकृपानैष्ठुयिुय सूजूयतिा् ्।।

Kshud-vyadhischa chikitsyatam pratidinam
bhikshaushadham bhujyatam,
Svadvannam na tu yachyatam vidhivasat praptena
santushyatam,
Sitoshnadi vishahyatam na tu vritha vakyam
samuccharyatam,
Audasinyam abhipsyatam ana-kripa-naishthuryam
utsrijyatam.

The instructions in this verse are directed towards the Sadhaka who is now in an advanced stage, as to how he should lead the rest of his life in the present body.

a) "Kshud-vyadhischa chikitsyatam-Let the disease of hunger be treated."

As the Sadhaka ascends to the higher rungs of the ladder of spiritual practice, the chances of his downfall are greater and greater, and hence, this important warning is given by the Acharya. Though during the early stages of his Sadhana, he had practised control of all the senses and the mind, there may arise in him the tendency to slowly relax especially in the case of the palate, the sense of taste. The Sannyasin is therefore admonished to consider hunger as a disease. As all diseases of the body and mind are treated with proper medicines, the Sadhaka should treat this disease of hunger also with the medicine of food and drink. It should never be left untreated, because without a healthy body, the Sadhana cannot be completed and the final goal reached. The medicine for the disease of hunger is a nourishing diet. Both overeating and starving are discouraged and the via media, the golden mean, is prescribed. Yoga is harmony. Extremes are to be avoided cautiously.

b) "Pratidinam bhikshaushadam bhujyatam-Let the monk take the medicine of alms daily."

Unlike other diseases, the disease of hunger is a daily recurring one and hence treatment also should be given daily. What is the medicine for this disease prescribed by the Acharya for the Sannyasin? It is Bhiksha--food received as alms. No one takes an overdose of medicine, but takes only the minimum, just sufficient to cure the disease. Similarly, the Sannyasin is enjoined to take only the absolute minimum food

to keep the body and soul together in a healthy condition, healthy enough to complete the Sadhana in this life itself.

c) "Svadvannam na tu yachyatam-Let him not beg for delicious dishes."

Again, applying the analogy of the treatment of disease, no patient can for obvious reasons demand from the doctor sweet medicines. Even so, the Sannyasin is prohibited from demanding delicious articles of food from the householder whom he approaches for appeasing his hunger. For, it is considered to be a sinful act because such demand will cause,inconvenience to those charitably-minded Grihasthas who give alms to them. The dispassion cultivated with great effort by the Sadhaka will give way to sense-indulgence, if he is not extremely careful in this matter.

d) "Vidhivasat praptena santushyatam-Let him be completely satisfied with what he gets as a result of his Prarabdha Karmas."

This instruction clarifies the mental attitude the Sannyasin should have, when he gets food to eat, and when he gets something to drink or some old and torn garment to cover his nakedness. He should have complete satisfaction. He should not entertain a feeling of want or insufficiency, about the quality and quantity of the articles received by him. He should not murmur or curse his fate which has brought him those articles. A feeling of complete satiety must prevail in him. Even during his early Sadhana period he had been cultivating Pratyahara-withdrawal of the mind from sense-objects-with great effort and of his own will, because of the discriminative knowledge that all sense-pleasures are only wombs of pain. He has subsequently renounced the world and taken to the fourth order of Sannyasa and plunged himself into Manana and Nididhyasana on the import of the Mahavakyas into which he

has been initiated by his preceptor. Under these conditions, there should be no occasion for any dissatisfaction on account of the presence or absence of any sense-object. None of the objects in the three worlds should be able to disturb his mind either through its presence or absence. There is the risk of a slipping down of the Sadhaka, till the very last stage, viz., the attainment of direct realisation of the Atman-Brahman, because the pull of the senses by and towards their objects coupled with the attraction of the objects by the senses, is too strong for ordinary Sadhakas. Hence it is that the Acharya has introduced this warning even at this advanced stage of the Sadhaka's march.

e) "Sitoshnadi vishahyatam-Let him endure calmly the pairs of opposites like heat and cold."

Heat and cold, pain and pleasure, merit and sin, love and hate, Daivic and Asuric qualities, good and bad, knowledge and ignorance, etc., are pairs of opposites which are to be transcended by the Sadhaka. He has already renounced what is considered as bad, sinful, Asuric, etc. Now in the advanced stage, the Sadhaka is exhorted to avoid their opposites also like the good, the meritorious, the Daivic, etc., because the Atman, the attainment of which is the final goal of life, is that which transcends all kinds of relations and all pairs of opposites. The Sadhaka should free himself even from what is generally considered as good in this world.

f) "Na tu vritha vakyam samuccharyatam-Let him not speak unnecessary words."

When all the other organs are controlled and prevented from contact with their respective objects, the organ of speech is found, in the case of many a Sadhaka, to take the upper hand and engage itself too much in activity, on the pretext of Loka Sangraha or uplift of humanity. In his over-anxiety to share his

knowledge with others, the Sannyasin with the best of intentions, starts preaching to his juniors first and gradually reaches the public at large when he is unknowingly dragged into unnecessary and unpleasant controversies with others. He easily gets himself entangled in them which fact he himself comes to realise only too late. Therefore, the Sadhaka is instructed to speak only when it is unavoidable. Further, too much of speaking will entail waste of energy which he has conserved with great effort by control of mind, organs, etc., during the early stages of his spiritual practice.

g) Audasinyam-abhipsyatam-Let him desire perfect indifference to all worldly affairs."

The Sadhaka who has embraced the order of Sannyasa, who has been initiated into the Mahavakyas and who is engaged whole time in reflection and profound meditation on their import, is advised to keep aloof from all worldly matters to avoid distraction. He is asked to keep an attitude of indifference-not the indifference of the ignorant and selfish people towards the suffering humanity--but the highest indifference of the wise which transcends all pairs of opposites. He is not expected, at this stage of the Sadhana, to mix with worldly-minded people, but if circumstances place him among them, he is advised to play the part of a witness unaffected by whatever happens around him. The Atman is described in the scriptures as the Supreme Witness in the sense that It is free from all actions and relationships and not in the ordinary sense of the term, viz., one who sees with the physical eyes. The Upanishad in trying to explain the nature of the Witness says: "It-the Atman-sees and yet sees not." Being non-dual, homogeneous, without modification, and the eternal Consciousness, It is described by the scriptures in the above enigmatic expression that It sees and yet sees not. The attitude

of the Sadhakashouldbeinharmonywithhistruenature which is thenatureoftheAtman.

h) "Jana-kripa-naishthuryamutsrijyatam-Lethimgiveup completelyboththeteelingsofkindnessandharshness towards others."

ThoughthisadviceisincludedinIV(e),specialmentionis made ofitagain,becauseofitsgreatimportanceandofthe possibilityofeventhewisebeingdraggeddown,withouttheir knowledge,iftheyarenotextremelycautious.Itishuman nature to entertain feelings of kindness or cruelty or unsympathetic attitude towards other creatures. While unkindness, cruelty, etc., are universally accepted as undesirable traits and therefore discouraged, kindness is generallyconsideredasagreatvirtuewhichallshouldtryto cultivate.Theuniversalbrotherhoodofmanisanoffshootof this virtue.InthecaseoftheadvancedSadhaka,eventhismay act asacauseofhisdownfallfromthegreatheightstowhich he hasrisenthroughlongandprotractedspiritualSadhana. This isillustratedintheSrimadBhagavataminthelifeof Bharata,averyhighlyevolvedsoul,whooutofcompassion towardsanewborndeerwhichhadlostitsmotherandwhich was abouttobewashedawaybythecurrentintheriver,took it to hisAshramandreared it.Thiscompassionslowly developedintolove,thenintoaffection,andthereafter,into great attachment,somuchso,thelastthoughtatthetimeof his deathwasabouttheyoungdeer.Thisbroughthimthebody of a deerinhisnextbirth.Hence,toavoidsuchdownfallsthe Sadhakaisadvisednottoentertainboththefeelingsof kindnessandharshness,buttostickontoanattitudeof supremeindifferencewhichtranscendsallpairsofopposites.

V

एकान्ते सिु ामयतां परतरे चेतःसिाधीयतां

पूणायि् सुसीक्ष्यतां जगहददं तद्भागधतं दृश्यति् ्।

राक्कि यरववलाप्यतां गचततबलान्नाप्युतुरैः स्श्लष्यतां ं

रारब्धं स्वि भुज्यतिाथ परब्रह्मात्मिना मथीयति् ्।।

Ekantesukham-asyatamparatarechetahsamadhiyatam,

Purnatma susamikshyatam jagadidam

Panayplaage tad-badhitam drisyatam,

Prakkarma pravilapyatam chiti-balan-napyuttaraih

slishyatam,

Prarabdham sthiyatambhujyatam atha parabrahmatmana

This fifth verse is more or less a description of a Liberated Sage-a Jivanmukta who passes on to the state of Videhamukti finally.

a) "Ekante sukham-asyatam-Let him rest comfortably in seclusion."

The monk aiming at the one, non-dual Atman-Brahman is to avoid all company and remain alone. That stage in which he was asked to resort to the company of the wise, is now transcended and in the present stage, the Sannyasin who is now a sage is counselled to keep aloof and remain in complete seclusion, so that he can keep his mind fixed on the import of the Mahavakyas. Seclusion usually means absence of another person nearby. Life in caves and forest Asrams is generally considered as secluded life. There is however a higher meaning which is applicable to the sage in meditation. To him seclusion is to keep his consciousness free of all duality. In other words, when his consciousness is fixed in the one, non-

dual Atman, he is said to be in seclusion. This has to be practised by the seeker, and physical seclusion will, to some extent, be helpful to attain this higher seclusion.

b) "Paratare chetah samadhiyatam-Let his mind completely merge in the Supreme Atman in Samadhi."

When the instruction in the just preceding section (V-a) is practised uninterruptedly for a long period, i.e., when the mind remains fixed in the consciousness of the Atman sufficiently long, the state of Samadhi or merging of the mind in the Atmic consciousness results. The Triputi, i.e., the triad of meditator, meditation and the object of meditation-all the three merge into the one Atmic consciousness. The subject-object difference no longer exists. The object becomes one with the Subject. The 'Subject' alone remains and therefore It loses its subjectivity also. The Sadhaka is no more a Sadhaka. He is a Siddha--a Jivanmukta or a liberated sage.

c) "Purnatma susamikshyatam-Let him now experience in full the Infinite Atman."

The sage has now the direct experience of the Atman which is Purna i.e. Infinite. When it is said that the Jivanmukta sage experiences the Infinite Atman, it means that he himself has become the Atman, for the Infinite alone can experience the Infinite. As long as one is finite, one can never experience the Infinite. The Upanishads declare that the knower of Brahman becomes Brahman Itself. This is further explained in the statement: remaining as Brahman he attains Brahman', which shows that there is no 'becoming' but only 'Being'. He realises that all along he had been the Atman itself and that all bondage and miseries were only mere appearances due to false Ajnana (ignorance).

d)"Jagadidam tad-badhitam drsyatam-Let him witness the disappearance of this universe in the Atman-Brahman."

With the direct realisation of the import of the Maha Vakyas which is Atman-Brahman identity, the sage finds himself remaining as the one, non-dual, unmoded Consciousness, the whole phenomenon merging, as it were, in the Noumenon. To him, there is nothing other than Brahman-the Self of this universe. The universe, distinct from Brahman, is naught. In the Mahavakya, 'Tat Tvam Asi', that which is represented by the term 'Tvam', viz., the Atman, has become one with that which is signified by the term 'Tat', viz., Brahman. There is no Tvam' different from 'Tat' and no 'Tat' separate from Tvam'. All differences have merged into the non-dual Reality. Similar is the case with the other Mahavakya 'Aham Brahmasmi'. The 'Aham' becomes one with 'Brahman'. In 'Prajnanam Brahma', 'Prajnanam dissolves in 'Brahman'. In 'Ayam Atma Brahma' 'Ayam-Atma' becomes one with 'Brahman'. Thus the sage of realisation experiences the highest absolute Reality the non- dual Atman-Brahman-Consciousness,

e) "Prakkarma pravilapyatam-Let him destroy the Sanchita Karmas,"

When the sage has merged himself in the birthless, deathless, eternal, non-dual Atman, all his Sanchita Karmas, i.e., those Karmas accumulated in hundreds of crores of past lives, are burnt to ashes. Like roasted seeds which have lost the capacity of germination, the past Samskaras and Vasanas of this sage which are burnt in the fire of Samyag-Jnana--Brahman-Knowledge can no more create any new body for him.

f) "Chitibalannapyuttaraih slishyatam-With the strength of the Consciousness of the Atman let him stop further accumulation of Agami Karmas."

A Jivanmukta (liberated sage) does not have the ego as it has merged in the Atman. He is unattached and homogeneous like the vast sky. Hence, there is no feeling of doership and

enjoyership in him. In the absence of these two feelings, the fruits of the Karmas done by his body hereafter cannot attach themselves to him and become the cause of either merits or demerits. A Jivanmukta, the scriptures state, is absolutely free and is not bound even by scriptural injunctions. He moves about freely in all the worlds. He neither accepts anything nor rejects anything. His mind is now one with the Atman. He does not entertain any desire for objects nor does he hate them. He is neither afraid of anyone nor is anyone afraid of him. Through this Supreme Brahman-Knowledge all his present Karmas are dried up and they do not therefore cause further rebirth even as a fried seed does not germinate.

g) "Prarabdham tviha bhujyatam-Let him exhaust his Prarabdha Karmas through actual experience of their results here."

When the Sanchita and Agami Karmas are destroyed, what remain are his Prarabdha Karmas-those Karmas which have brought about the present body to the sage. This body will continue as long as the fruits of those Karmas remain and it falls when they are completely spent up through experience. Therefore, the Jivanmukta is said to experience the Prarabdha Karmas. But, this is an answer to the question of the ignorant who see the body of the Jivanmukta also moving and acting like others. They ask: "If the effects of ignorance are destroyed with their root by samyag-Jnana (Brahman-Knowledge), then how does the body live?" It is to convince such ignorant people who entertain doubt of this kind, that the scriptures posit Prarabdha in the Self-realised sage,-says the Acharya in his book, Vivekachudamani'. The fact is that with the dawn of Brahman-Knowledge and the direct realisation of the Atman-Brahman, all the three kinds of Karmas, viz., Sanchita, Agami and Prarabdha are completely annihilated. There is only the non-dual Brahman--the pure, infinite Awareness without

beginning or end, immediate and transcendent. There is absolutely no duality whatsoever in It.

h) "Atha parabrahmatmana sthiyatam

Thereafter, let him firmly rest in the Supreme Transcendental Brahman-Atman."

The sage finally rests in his own Satchidananda Svarupa-in the non-dual Brahman itself. He is now a Videhamukta-a liberated one without a body. Though in others' view, he appears to possess a body, to him there is no body, no world, nothing except Brahman. If he sees the world, he sees it as Brahman, and not as anything different from It. The state of a Jivanmukta itself defies description. Then what to say about the state of a Videhamukta! He is the infinite Brahman itself. As Brahman is beyond speech and thought, his state is also indescribable by human language, unthinkable by the human mind and ununderstandable by the human intellect, in the usual sense of these terms. But It is known and understood through direct experience', It being nearer than one's own body. We are actually experiencing It every day, nay every moment, but we are not conscious of It because of ignorance and of the resultant innumerable desires in the mind. We are IT alone. IT alone is.

यः श्लोकपञ्चकसिदं पठते ंनुष्यः

सस्ञ्चत्तय्यनुहदनं ंस्मथरतिुपेुय् ।

तमयाशु संसृंतृतदवानलतीव्रघोर-

तापः रशास्न्तिुपुयातत गचततरसादात् ं॥

Yah sloka-panchakam-idam pathatemanushyah,

Sanchintayatyanudinam sthiratamupetya;

Tasyasu samsriti-davanala-tivra-ghora- Tapah prasantim-upayati chitiprasadat. The closing verse describes, in the traditional manner, the
Phala or the fruit that accrues to one who studies these verses. It says that he who studies these five verses and reflects over their imports daily in his mind which is purified and made steady, freeing it from all kinds of distractions, and who practises the Sadhana as laid down in these verses, will be speedily saved from the burning heat of the great blazing forest fire of this cycle of transmigration, through the grace of the Atman. Thus, starting from the study of scriptures, which is the first
rung in the spiritual ladder, the Sadhaka is instructed to ascend gradually step by step till he finds himself firmly fixed in the Supreme Brahman. Instead of ascending from the lower to the immediate next higher rung of a ladder, if a man leaves off one or more steps and tries to jump to the higher rungs, he would naturally fall and break his legs. Even so, attempt to short-circuit the prescribed process is the cause of failure of many an aspirant in the spiritual path. Performance of one's duties without desire for fruits, worship of God through them, renunciation of desires, expiation of sins, reflection over the defects in sense-pleasures, a firm resolve to attain Liberation and leaving one's own home, are the next seven steps in the first stage. In the next stage, company of the wise, surrender to God, cultivation of Shatsampat, complete renunciation of Karmas, approaching the preceptor, service at his feet, prayer for initiation and getting initiated into the Mahavakyas are prescribed for the Sadhaka. Then comes the third stage, where he is instructed to reflect over the import of the Mahavakyas, to completely depend on the Upanishads, to avoid all arguments against the spirit of the scriptures, to follow the line

of arguments prescribed in them, to maintain continuously the thought I am Brahman', to renounce pride and the idea of 'I am the body', and to avoid all unnecessary argumentation and dialectical discussions with the learned and the wise. The fourth verse, in describing the next stage, exhorts the monk to consider hunger as a disease, to treat it with the medicine of food received through begging, to renounce desire for delicious dishes, to remain satisfied with what he gets through his Prarabdha Karmas, to lead his life enduring the pairs of opposites like heat and cold, to avoid all unnecessary talks, to maintain an indifferent attitude to worldly matters and to avoid hatred as well as feeling of compassion towards others. The last and the fifth stage is where the Sadhaka resorts to complete seclusion and fixes his mind in Samadhi on the Supreme Atman. He now directly experiences the Infinite Atman-Brahman and does not see the world different from It. He is freed from all the three kinds of Karmas and finally rests in the Atman-Brahman, the one stupendous, supreme, non-dual Reality. All questions about the 'I', world' and God' dissolve once for all.

OM TAT SAT

BRAHMA SUTRAS

A REMEMBRANCER

Gurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj states (in a different context-not in his commentary on the Brahma Sutras) that the whole subject matter of the Brahma Sutras is revealed when the first and the last Sutras of the text are read together, and it is this: "Enquiry into the nature of Brahman by a qualified aspirant results in immortality (Athato Brahmajijnasa-Anavritti Sabdat)".

The mind is a false superimposition on the Atman-Brahman and the whole universe is a projection of the mind. The aim of all the Upanishads is to remove this false superimposition. The Brahma Sutras purport to effect it through logical argumentation, based on the scriptures and the experience of the sages. Many examples, analogies, allegories and metaphors are used to instruct the Supreme Truth which transcends the world. All examples and explanations cannot but belong to the world of unreal superimposition, and as such, none of them would be able to fully reveal the Truth. But, they can serve as pointers or signboards. Just as a walking stick cannot walk by itself, but still it can help one to walk, all scriptures cannot describe the Truth, but can certainly help one to negate the superimposition. We should always bear in mind, throughout the study of this scripture, the great Acharya Sankara's statement that all forms of worldly and Vedic discussions and dealings which are connected with the means and object of knowledge, start by taking for granted this false superimposition of the Self and the non-self which is otherwise called nescience. So is the case with all scriptures. This is a warning to the seekers not to waste their time in too much of logical argumentation which could not only not lead to any useful purpose, but also act as a very subtle but great

obstruction to realise the goal. The individual intellect can take up to a limit. There everyone has to leave it and resort to intuition through Nididhyasana.

The 'Brahma Sutras', also called Nyaya Prasthana, is the third of the Prasthana Traya (triple canon of Vedanta), the other two being the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita, called the Sruti Prasthana and the Smriti Prasthana, respectively. It is called as Nyaya Prasthana as it sets forth the teachings of the Vedanta philosophy in a logical manner. The 'Brahma Sutras' is also known as the 'Vedanta Sutras', as the aphorisms deal with Vedanta; 'Sariraka Sutras', as it discusses the nature of the embodied soul; 'Bhikshu Sutras', as it is best suited for Bhikshus, the Sannyasins, and 'Uttara Mimamsa', as it is an enquiry into the Upanishads, the concluding portions of the Vedas. The text consists of 4 Chapters, each Chapter containing 4 Sections. Each of the Sections consists of several topics, their number ranging from 6 to 36, the total number of topics being 191. Each topic consists of one or more Sutras, the least number under one topic being 1 and the largest 17. The total number of Sutras is 555.

CHAPTER-1

SAMANVAYA ADHYAYA

(CHAPTER ON RECONCILIATION)

Section I

This chapter mainly reconciles the apparent differences in some Upanishadic passages, and hence the name, 'Chapter on Reconciliation'. The Section starts with the prerequisites to enter into the enquiry on the Absolute, the Atman-Brahman. One should possess the fourfold qualification, "Sadhana-chatushtaya", viz., (1) discrimination between the Atman and Anatman (Viveka), (2) dispassion born out of this discrimination, for the experience of the fruits of actions here and hereafter (Vairagya), (3) all the virtues which are broadly grouped under the six comprehensive terms, Sama, Dama, Uparati, Titiksha, Samadhana Sraddha and (Shad-sampatti) and (4) an intense aspiration for liberation (Mumukshutva). He who possesses these prerequisites can start the deliberation on Brahman, after an enquiry into the Karmas and Upasanas or even before it. Why should an aspirant start an enquiry into the Absolute at all? Because, from such enquiry realisation of Truth follows, and from realisation follows liberation from the Samsara. Though all have a general recognition of the Atman from the fact that nobody feels 'I do not exist', and nobody has any doubt as 'whether I exist or not', still there is conflict about Its distinctive nature. Hence, the first Sutra says that after possessing the fourfold qualification and after the study of the Upanishads, the Sadhaka should start an enquiry into the nature of Brahman so that realisation of the Truth may be effected which reveals the ever-revealed Brahman.

Brahman is that from which this universe has been projected, in which it appears to exist, and into which it appears to dissolve, and the scriptures may be said to be the valid means

of the knowledge of Brahman. Brahman is the hidden import of all the Upanishads. All the Upanishadic texts become fully reconciled when they are accepted as establishing Brahman. Brahman is the uniform topic of all Vedanta texts.

Brahman alone is the efficient and material cause of the universe and not the Pradhana, mentioned by the Samkhya philosophy.

The scriptures say that the Absolute can be realised in two ways, one as qualified and conditioned by the names and forms and the other as unqualified, unrelated and unconditioned by anything. Some of the meditations (Upasanas or Vidyas) are stated to be helpful to attain worldly ends while some others, the ultimate liberation. Whatever one is or whatever one attains depends on what one thinks and how he thinks. The Sruti says: "Tam yatha yathopasate tadeva bhavati-in whatever form or condition one meditates on It, one becomes that" (Mudgalopanishad-2). "Yatha kraturasmin-loke purusho bhavati, tathetah pretya bhavati-that which is meditated upon in this world by a person, he becomes that after death" (Ch.Up.lll14-i). The Smriti also voices the same truth in "Yam yam vapi smaranbhavam tyajatyante kalevaram; tam tamevaiti Kaunteya, sada tat-bhava bhavitah-O Arjuna, that form or condition which a man always remembers during his life and with which he leaves the world, as a result of the remembrance, his Jiva attains that form in the next birth" (Bh. Gita-VIII-6).

The scriptures say that the knowledge of the Atman which is the cause of immediate liberation, Sadyomukti, can be attained through certain meditations. Still doubts will not leave one easily as to how meditation on a conditioned entity, however great it may be, can lead to the Unconditioned Reality. In order to clear these doubts, the questions of interpretation of doubtful

texts in the Upanishads, the different views of great teachers on the subject, the various forms of meditations and their different results and allied topics have been discussed in the remaining Sutras of the text.

The aphorisms starting from 1-1-xii till the end of the first section, establish through arguments, that the following terms occurring in the Upanishads mean only Brahman:

(1) Atma 'Anandamaya' occurring in 'Anyoantara Anandamaya-(compared to the Vijnanamaya and different from it) there is another Self within, the Anandamaya' (Tai. Up. 11-5).

(2) 'The golden Person seen within the sun' and 'this Person seen within the eye' referred to in 'ya escho antar-aditye hiran mayah Purasho drisyate' (Ch. Up. 1-6-vi) and 'ya esho antarakshini Purusho drisyate (Ch. Up. 1-7-v).

(3) Akasa (ether) occurring in 'Asya lokasya ka gatiriti? Akasa iti-What is the essence of this world? It is Akasa' (Ch. Up. 1-9-i).

(4) Prana (vital force) occurring in 'Katama sa devata iti? Prana iti-What is that deity? It is Prana' (Ch. Up. 1-11-iv and v). Pranosmi-I am Prana' and 'Prana eva prajnatmedam sariram parigrihyothapayati-It is Prana alone, the intelligent Self that seizes this body and makes it rise up' (Kau. Up. III-2 and 3).

(5) Jyotih (Light) occurring in 'Atha yadatah paro divo Jyotir-driyate visvatah prishteshu sarvatah prishteshu anuttame shu uttameshu lokeshu idam vava tad-yadi dam asmin-antah purushe jyotih-Again that Light that shines in the excellent unsurpassable worlds above this heaven, above all beings and above all the worlds, even this is the Light that is within a human being' (Ch. Up. III-13-vii).

Under 'Anandamaya' discussed in Sutras xii to xix, one's real nature during deep sleep is discussed. The question has to be viewed from two standpoints, the absolute and the conditioned or relative. From the view-point of the Absolute, every one is always of the nature of pure Sat-chit-ananda, whether in waking. dreaming, deep sleep, swoon, death or Samadhi. There cannot be any doubt about it. All discussions about both the conditioned and the unconditioned can only be in the conditioned state. Sages like Vyasa and Vasishtha have discussed again and again about the unconditioned Absolute. The Sages and their discussions which one reads or hears, are the projections of one's consciousness (mind?). Both the conditioned and its opposite or counterpart, the 'unconditioned', have necessarily to be one's own projection. Brahman transcends them both. The Truth, the Atman Brahman includes all, excludes all and transcends all inclusions and exclusions, all at once.

Here, under this topic, as in other topics, Sri Acharya Sankara states the doubt first, then the opponent's view and thereafter gives the Sutra (1-1-xii) 'Anandamayabhyasat', as refuting the opponent's view. The doubt is whether Anandamaya refers to blissful sheath or 'Bliss' i.e. Brahman. The opponent's view is that it is the former. Acharya says that this is refuted by the Sutra, which means that 'Anandamaya' is Brahman. After confirming this view with the support of the seven succeeding Sutras (Nos. xiii to xix), the Acharya, contrary to his consistent practice followed in the case of the remaining Sutras, says in this particular case alone, that in this connection he has to say that the 'Anandamaya' means the blissful sheath, and thus seems to agree with the opponent's view. There is, therefore, reason to doubt about what Badarayana, the author of the Sutras, wants to establish in these Sutras xii to xix under this topic. Does he want to establish that in deep sleep a person is

one with Brahman or one with the bliss sheath, the causal body?

None can deny that the whole of the Brahma Sutras, establishes that Brahman is the non-dual Truth, the world seen as though separate from it, including the mind which is said to project it (the world), is Mithya (seen as real though non-existent apart from Brahman) and the so-called Jiva, the individual is really Brahman and Brahman alone and not anything distinct from It. The Acharya says in his introduction to Sutra I-1-xii that the remaining portion of the book is intended to show that all though Brahman is one, It is spoken of in the Upanishadic Mantras as either to be meditated on with the help of Its relation with the limiting adjuncts, or to be known without the help of the relation.

In the first Chapter on 'Reconciliation' more than two dozen Upanishadic Mantras of doubtful import, starting with 'Ananda maya' in I-1-xii and ending with 'The Self to be seen, heard of, reflected on and meditated upon' in I-4-xxiii, are taken up and discussed. All of them excepting 'Anandamaya', have been reconciled by establishing that they mean only Brahman and nothing else. Hence, it is only reasonable to hold that the first one 'Anandamaya also means Brahman and not the blissful sheath.

In Sutra I-3-xlii even the term 'Vijnanamaya Purusha occurring in Br. Up. IV-3-vii, the person identified with the intellect and is in the midst of the organs, is established as the Supreme Brahman.

No useful purpose is served by proving that 'Anandamaya' is the individual Jiva in ignorance. It is well known to all in this world that the Jiva in all the three steps is in ignorance. That is why the aspirant world is striving for liberation from this

bondage caused by ignorance. No scriptures is necessary to establish it through a long process of reasoning.

On the other hand the conclusion that 'Anandamaya is the Supreme Atman can help the aspirant to realise the Truth that in all the states he is the Supreme, pure Consciousness. When once he gets the firm conviction that in deep sleep he is in his 'Real nature', he can extend it to the dream state, when nothing really happens even though there is an unreal appearance of an unreal world. When again through an impartial and unprejudiced judgment he is convinced that the waking and dream states are both made up of the same mental stuff, and are an unreal superimposition on the pure Consciousness, he can come to the final conclusion that the waking state also is pure Consciousness just as the other two states are. With this intellectual certainty arrived at through ratiocination based on one's own experience in the three states, one can start Nididhyasana and attain Kaivalya.

This subject of the Soul in deep sleep state is again considered in the second section of the third Chapter Herein are dealt with the reconciliation of a few texts of doubtful import dealing with Saguna Brahman.

1. 'The Being which consists of mind, whose body is Breath', mentioned in Ch. Up. III-14-2, is not the individual soul, but the Supreme Saguna Brahman.

2. 'He to whom the Brahmanas and Kshatriyas form food and death as condiment', occurring in Kath. Up. 1-2-xxv, is the Supreme Brahman.

3. 'The two which entered into the cave' mentioned in Kath. Up. 1-34, are the individual soul identified with the intellect and the Supreme Brahman, and not the intellect and the individual soul.

4. 'The person within the eye' referred to in Ch. Up. IV-15-i is Brahman, and not the reflected image nor any individual soul.

5. 'The Antaryamin' of Br. Up. III-7-1 to xxiii is not any Yogin or any god with any extraordinary power, but Brahman Himself.

6. 'That which cannot be seen' mentioned in the Mun. Up. 1-1-vi is not the individual soul or Pradhana but Brahman.

7. 'Vaisvanara' in Ch. Up. V-18-i and ii is Brahman and not the gastric fire, nor the elemental fire, nor the presiding deity of fire, nor the individual soul.

Section 3

This section continues the reconciliation of the texts of doubtful import, but which deal with the Nirguna aspect of Brahman and establishes that:

1. 'That in which the heaven, earth, etc., are woven' mentioned in Mun. Up. 11-2v is Brahman.

2. 'Bhuma' mentioned in 'yo vai bhuma tat-sukham' (Ch. Up. VII-23) is Brahman.

3. 'Aksharam' occurring in 'Etad vai tail-aksharam' (Br. Up. III-8-viii) is Brahman.

4. 'Param Purusham-the highest Person', occurring in Pr. Up. V-5 refers to the Supreme Brahman and not Hiranyagarbha.

5. 'Daharah Akasah-the small Ether' (Ch. Up. VIII-1-i) is Brahman and not the material space or the Jiva.

6. 'He after whom everything shines' occurring in Kath. Up. V-15 and Mun. Up. 11-2-x is Brahman and not any lustrous or effulgent matter.

7. 'The Person of the size of a thumb' mentioned in Kath. Up. II-1-xii and xiii is Brahman and not the individual Jiva.

8. 'Prana' discussed in Kath. Up. 1114. ii is Brahman and not the familiar vital force.

9. 'Jyoti-Light' mentioned in Ch. Up. VIII-12-iii is Supreme Brahman and not the familiar light.

10. 'Akasa-Ether' occurring in Ch. Up. VIII-14 is Brahman and not the elemental space.

11. 'Vijnanamaya Purusha-the Person identified with the intellect' dealt with in Br. Up. IV-3-vii is Brahman and not the transmigrating Jiva.

Section 4

The following conclusions have been arrived at in this Section:

1. The two terms 'Mahat' and 'Avyakta' occurring in Kath. Up. 1-3-x and xi, are not Samkhya terms; they mean 'Hiranyagarbha' and 'body' respectively. Avyakta does not mean Pradhana, but means the body, occurring in the simile of the body and the chariot. Mahat means Hiranyagarbha. 2.

'The Tri-coloured Aja' mentioned in the Sv. Up. IV-5 does not mean Pradhana, but the Power of the Lord.

3. The Pancha Pancha Jana' in Br. Up. IV-4-xvii, are not the 25 principles of the Samkhyas, but refer to Prana, eye, ear, food and mind.

4. Although there are differences in the order of creation mentioned in the scriptures, as far as the creator is concerned there is no such difference. All the Upanishads uniformaly assert that Brahman alone is the creator.

5. 'He who is in fact the creator or Master of these Purushas or beings or rather of whom this is surely the work', occurring in Kau. Up. IV-19, is not Prana or the individual soul but Brahman.

6. The Self, to be seen, heard, reflected and meditated upon' discussed in Br. Up. 11-4-v is the Supreme Self and not the individual self.

7. Brahman is the cause of creation. He is not only the efficient cause but also the material cause. The world springs from Brahman by way of Vivarta Parinama, transformation through superimposition.

8. The Pradhana which is the equilibrium state of the three Gunas being itself a superimposition on Brahman, the ultimate cause of the world is Brahman only. The arguments advanced totranscend the conclusions of the Samkhya philosophy which isnearest to the Truth, holds good much more to transcend the other philosophies such as Vaiseshika, Nyaya and others.

CHAPTER II

AVIRODHA ADHYAYA

(CHAPTER ON NON-CONTRADICTION)

The various philosophical schools such as Vaiseshika, Nyaya, Samkhya, Yoga, Purva Mimamsa and Uttara Mimamsa, the four different schools of Buddhism, Jainism, even the Charvakas, the Pasupata and Bhagavata schools are only different steps in the ladder of evolution of human consciousness, leading to the Supreme Brahman. The essence of the different religions of the world also is the one non-dual Supreme Brahman. These different philosophies and religions may be said to be mutually complementing one another. Each supplements the others. They should never be taken as contradicting or opposing one another. The Truth, the Supreme Brahman, while transcending all, is also immanent in all. So, when in the course of instructions, the author of the Brahma Sutras or the Commentator says 'no', 'I refute it' and so on, to the followers of the different schools, the intention is only to point out that the Supreme Brahman transcends all that is said, for all words and sentences only limit that Unlimited Being. Speech is incapable of expressing the Absolute, and this is the reason why the Upanishads say that the best way of describing Him is 'neti, neti-not this, not this'. And in the same breath, the Upanishads declare that the universe is non-different from Brahman as He is non-dual and infinite. This chapter clears all contradictions raised by those who follow other schools of thought and hence its name 'Chapter on non-contradiction'.

Section 1

This section starts with a consideration of the Samkhya philosophy of sage Kapila wherein Pradhana is said to be the cause of the world. The Samkhya Sutras and the Karika

(commentary thereof) form part of the Smriti texts which come next to the Vedas in importance and authority. Hence, the followers of the Samkhya may say that the views contained therein should not be slighted. If the view of the Vedantin that Brahman is the cause of the world is accepted, it tantamounts to a rejection of the Samkhya Philosophy. In reply, the Vedantin says that in case the Samkhya view is accepted, then also there will arise the same defect of non-acceptance or rejection of Manu Smriti and such other Smritis which agree with the Upanishadic philosophy and say that Brahman alone is the cause of the world which is an unreal superimposition on Brahman.

On these grounds, the Yoga system of Patanjali known as Sa-Isvara Samkhya which propounds the philosophy of Prakriti being the cause of the world, is also pointed out to be not in agreement with the import of the Upanishads which affirms the nondual nature of Brahman. While agreeing with the two systems of Samkhya and Yoga wherever they do not contradict the Upanishads, the Sutras say that in regard to the cause of the world, the views of both the schools have to be transcended.

How can there be any relation between world and Brahman? The world is insentient, while Brahman is pure sentience. Accepting the rule that cause and effect should be of the same nature, the question arises how can the Upanishadic view that Brahman is the cause of the world be accepted. The reply is that there are instances wherein inanimate objects come out of animate beings, as in the case of hair and nails from living men. There are also instances of living beings such as scorpion and other creatures coming out of insentient matter such as cowdung and similar materials. The Upanishads say that the Supreme Brahman Himself has become this world of

sentient and insentient beings which are, therefore, non-different from Brahman.

If Brahman is the cause of the world, it may be argued, when the world dissolves in Brahman at the time of dissolution, Brahman which is one and non-dual, would be contaminated by the presence of the many-ness of the world. This also is not reasonable as seen from the example of pot and clay. When a pot, a product of earth, returns back to its cause when it is destroyed, it becomes the clay. The pot does not change the nature of the clay by imparting to it, the name and form of the former. The pot losing its individuality once again becomes clay. So is the case with the world. At the time of dissolution, the world becomes Brahman. The non-dual nature of Brahman is not contaminated by the absorption of the world at the time of dissolution.

The defect pointed out by the Samkhyas in the previous paragraph can equally be levelled against their own philosophy. For it says that at the time of re-absorption, the effect, viz., the world of objects, passes back into the state of non-distinction with the cause Pradhana, the state of equilibrium of the Gunas. Pradhana would thus lose its pure state and become contaminated by the distinct objects of the world.

Mere argument based on reasoning alone by the human individual intellect, cannot help us to come to any conclusion. Sages, as we know them from their writings which go under the name of Smritis, differ in their presentation of the one, non-dual Truth. So wherever the Smritis are found to differ from the Sruti, reasoning conforming to the latter should be accepted. Thus, the right conclusion is that Brahman alone is both the material and efficient cause of the world as affirmed in the Upanishads.

When the chief wrestler is defeated by one who is stronger than him, it follows that all the other wrestlers in the group are also vanquished. Similarly, when the Samkhya system which approximates to the Advaita system of Vedanta, is transcended by reasoning based upon Upanishadic theory, it is to be considered that the other systems like the Vaiseshika and the rest which state that the atoms are the ultimate cause of the universe, are also transcended. Just as waves and ripples in the ocean which are one with the ocean, both being water, are considered separate entities, even so, the subject and object, the enjoying soul and the enjoyed objects which are nothing but Brahman, may yet be considered separate for phenomenal transactions.

If all diversity is unreal, the scriptures, the teacher and liberation also will be of no use, they being unreal entities. This argument advanced only in the state of ignorance, is baseless, since they are useful in the ignorant state till the dawn of the knowledge of the non-dual Brahman. The knowledge of the unreal dream is real, although the dream world itself is false and does not exist. The effect exists in the cause as one with it before creation and it continues to be non-different after creation also. The word Asat used in the scriptures, does not refer to complete non-existence. Examples like a piece of cloth rolled up and spread out, a cloth and thread, the chief Prana and the organs, will help us to grasp the Truth.

The following doubts may arise in the mind of the seeker, who is told that the individual Jiva and Brahman are non-different: (a) If the two are one and the same, how can the Jiva who is Brahman, cause to himself pain such as birth, death, disease and the like? (b) A pure non-dual Being such as Brahman cannot and will not take an impure body as the Jiva has done. (c) Brahman is not wise as He is causing pain and suffering to Himself. All this goes against the accepted conclusion of all the

scriptures that Brahman is all Bliss, pristine and pure jaya Consciousness, omnipotent and omniscient.

To this, the Sutras reply as follows: Brahman has not really become the individual Jiva. Brahman is a mere witness of the unreal show. He has neither good nor evil, neither pleasure nor pain. The pairs of opposites are imaginary and illusory. No fault can cling to Brahman, It being infinite and subtler than even space. When even space cannot be touched by anything that is good or bad, how can Brahman who is subtler than space, be affected by this unreal world of appearance? It can never be. Just as the same earth produces mere stones as well as costly diamonds, just as the same earth causes the sprouting of plants and trees of different nature, just as the same food produces hair, nails, blood, flesh and many other similar divergent things in the body, even so, Brahman has projected this world of so-called good and evil, pleasure and pain, etc. All effects are mere speech and mere name, whereas their cause, Brahman alone is real. The unreal dream world of divergent and distinct objects comes from the real dreamer who is one only. For all these reasons, there is nothing illogical in accepting Brahman as the cause of this world.

Before creation, there could not have been anything in the form of material, instruments and action, except Brahman, the Sat, Existence-Absolute. In the absence of these, how could Brahman create this world of umpteen souls and objects? The Sutras say that creation is through Sat-samkalpa of Brahman, by a mere flat of the will of the Supreme who is omnipotent. It is something like gods creating palaces etc., by mere thought, and like milk becoming curd without any external instruments and materials for action.

Another objection is raised and answered. If Brahman itself has become this world, either the entire Brahman becomes

changed into the world in which case there would be no Brahman when there is the world. This contradicts the scriptures affirming the eternal nature of Brahman. On the other hand, if only a part of Brahman alone has become this world, then Brahman becomes finite and divisible which also contradicts the scriptural statement that Brahman is one, partless, homogeneous, indivisible Whole. The reply is that the entire Brahman does not become the world, and still Brahman is without parts. These two apparently contradicting statements have to be accepted, without murmer, as true, as they are made by the infalliable Vedas which are the only reliable source of knowledge on this Supramundane question of creation. The creation of the world from Brahman is quite unlike our creation of new objects in this world. It is unique in its nature. The world is a mere unreal appearance like the snake in a rope due to illusion. The creation from Brahman is by the inscrutable power of Brahman. It is just like the creation of the dream world, and of magic by magicians. Being omnipotent, Brahman can manifest Himself as the universe without changing His non-dual, homogeneous nature, and yet remain beyond the universe in His transcendental aspect.

If the mind raises a doubt as to how Brahman who is bodiless, can have power to create the world, when we find that in this world only beings with a body alone have power to create things, the Sutras reply that in the case of Brahman, His power is Maya which is not like any power that we can conceive of. The power of Maya in the Lord is unique and it is indescribable, being beyond the power of speech and mind.

To the question how can Brahman be the Creator as He cannot have any motive for creation, the reply is given that His creation is a mere sport as it were. Children have no motive whatsoever when they engage themselves in play.

'If Brahman is the creator, He is partial and cruel'-if this be the objection, the Sutras reply that He is neither partial nor cruel, for He takes into consideration the merits and demerits of beings. What about the first creation when there is no possibility of any merit or demerit? The answer given by the scriptures to this question is that creation being beginningless, there is no question of first creation. As Brahman is attributeless, how can He be the material cause of this world? The reply is that Brahman only appears as the universe, just as a rope appears as a snake in semi-darkness, a mother of pearl appears as silver in bright sunlight and just as the dream world appears as real in complete darkness in sleep.

Section 2

In this Section, some of the important different schools of thought prevalent at the time of Badarayana, the author of the Sutras, such as Samkhya, Vaiseshika, Bauddha, Jaina, Pasupata and Bhagavata or Pancharatra, are dealt with. Their shortcomings are pointed out, so that the Sadhaka may not get stuck up with these philosophies, but may proceed further and attain the Supreme which transcends all, and is therefore beyond all thought and word.

Seers of all great Darsanas, whether they agree with the major tenets of the Vedas or not, are wise sages and hence they are respected and revered and their tenets are followed by many. All of them contain partial truths. The Supreme goal of human life being the whole Truth, the great Sage Badarayana has, with a view to take the Sadhakas to nothing less than that whole Truth, pointed out the partial nature of the truths revealed in the different schools of thought, so that seekers may by pursuing further, reach that Whole, the Purnam.

Referring to the followers of Samkhya, it is said that their non-intelligent Pradhana can never be able to create, maintain and

dissolve periodically and systematically this vast universe which is seen to be a perfect cosmos. The argument that the inert Pradhana of its own accord becomes active, just as water by itself flows, rain by itself comes down from the clouds, and milk by itself comes from the cow, is met by pointing out that in all these examples, action is directed by the Supreme Lord alone. Their contention that the inert Pradhana acquires power to create in the presence of the Purusha, implies impulsion by the Purusha. It cannot therefore hold water, since the Purusha is, according to them, always inactive, indifferent and not an agent. When the Samkhya says that Pradhana by itself becomes this universe, just as grass eaten by a cow, by itself becomes milk, he is reminded of the fact that grass eaten, by itself cannot and does not become milk, as is the case when it is eaten by a bull.

Here also, it is the Supreme Lord that brings about the transformation of grass into milk. The silly argument that the creation of the world by the inert Pradhana in the proximity of the Purusha who is not an agent, like the movement of a lame man by sitting on the shoulders of a blind man, the former directing the latter and the latter moving the former, falls flat even according to their own philosophy which says the Purusha is perfect, inactive and indifferent, and Pradhana is Pradhana is an absolutely independent entity. When they say creation starts when the equillibrium of the three Gunas is disturbed, they cannot give any valid cause why it is disturbed to effect the first creation. Thus, for all these and many other defects which exists in it, the Samkhya Philosophy cannot truly and fully satisfy the enquiring mind and has therefore to be transcended.

The Vaiseshika Philosophy says that indivisible, minute, partless atoms are the cause of the universe. How two partless atoms when combined can produce a combined atom with

parts, cannot be logically explained. In atoms, there cannot be any tendency to unite, and the unseen principle Adrishta which is said to cause union, is also non-sentient and cannot, therefore, act. The attribution of colour to the atoms contradicts their theory that the atoms are minutest without any magnitude. If the atoms of the elements possess the same number of qualities as the respective elements, then the atom of earth must be bigger than the atom of water, atom of water bigger than the atom of fire and so on. And this contradicts the sizelessness of the atoms. For these and other reasons, the Vaiseshika theory of atoms being the cause of the universe is transcended.

The Buddhistic Realists recognise two aggregates, the external material world and the internal mental world. The two together constitute the universe. The external world is again made up of aggregates of atoms which are of four kinds, hard earth atom, viscid water atom, hot fire atom and mobile air atom. The internal world is constituted of five Skandhas, groups, viz., Rupa, Vijnana, Vedana, Samjna and Samskara. The formation of the aggregates cannot be explained on the basis of their philosophy of momentariness and absence of any intelligent principle. No cause can however exist when everything is momentary. If it is said effects are produced without cause, then it would be going against their theory that every effect has a cause. If cause is accepted, then because everything is momentary, cause and effect should exist simultaneously at the next moment. This would mean cause lasts for more than one moment which undermines their own theory. Conscious and unconscious destruction, advanced by them, would be impossible owing to momentary existence and owing to the fact that there is no real destruction of objects but only change in their name and form. Their theory of liberation is destruction of nescience which according to them is the false

idea of permanency in things momentary. Nescience being momentary there would be no necessity of Sadhana. Since people have memory, their experience cannot be momentary. They argue that existence springs from non-existence. The seed after its destruction becomes the sprout. This view, if accepted, will result in chaos inasmuch as anything would spring up from nothing, for nonexistences of two different things are the same and have no difference. Liberation also can come without any effort. For all these reasons, the views of the Realists are not very helpful.

The Buddhistic idealism which says that ideas alone exist, is not the full truth. The view of the Idealists that the external world is non-existent like the horns of a man, is not correct. Their statement that the internal cognition appears as something external shows that the external world is there and is not completely non-existent. It has empirical reality as distinguished from the illusory reality of the dream world. The Idealists say that the external world of waking and the internal world of dream are alike. This statement is refuted on account of the contrary experience of all. The Vedantins view of the illusoriness of the waking world is based on the ultimate truth of Consciousness being the substratum of the waking and dream world. Since these Idealists do not admit the existence of the non-dual, eternal, indivisible, imperishable Consciousness, their view that waking and dream are alike, is unacceptable from everyone's experience. Their view that the notion of objects in the absence of real objects, can be accounted for by accepting the preceding Samskaras, is defective, since it would lead to an infinite regress. Another defect in their philosophy is that the ego-consciousness being momentary, their is no possibility of its being the seat of Samskaras. Thus, for all these reasons, their view is defective and has to be transcended.

As for the view of the absolute nihilist, no great argument is necessary for its transcendence, since it is opposed to all means of valid knowledge.

The Jaina School has seven categories-soul, non-soul, impulsion of organs issuing outward, restraint, destruction, bondage and release; five Astikayas-soul, matter, merit, demerit and space; and Saptabhanginaya logic with seven facets),-it may exist, may not exist, may and may not exist, may be inexpressible, may exist and may be inexpressible, may not exist and may be inexpressible, may and may not exist and may be inexpressible. How can contradictory qualities exist in one substance simultaneously! Heaven and liberation also become doubtful. Confusion will arise about everything. The seven categories and the five Astikayas also become doubtful. Thus they cannot give a reasonable and coherent explanation of the world. This philosophy also is not satisfactory.

The Pasupata School of the Mahesvara say that God is only the efficient cause of the world, the material cause being atoms of the Nyaya and Vaiseshika Schools or Pradhana of the Samkhya and Yoga. They also say that God is the ruler of the Pradhana and of the souls which are different from Him, all the three being separate and infinite. There is no consistency in the reasoning adopted. God would have to be charged with partiality. As the Lord, Pradhana and the soul are omnipresent and devoid of parts, there can be no relationship of conjunction or of inherence between the Lord and the other two. Hence, they cannot be ruled by Him as they say. As Pradhana and the souls are not objects of perception, the argument that the Lord directs them like a potter directs the clay, is not reasonable, and is against observed facts. He cannot also rule Pradhana and the souls, like Jiva ruling the senses. This analogy is not a fitting one. Jiva is seen to enjoy pleasure and suffer pain from which we infer that it rules the organs. If this analogy is

accepted we would have to presume that the Lord also would enjoy pleasure and suffer pain, caused by Pradhana. The whole philosophy if accepted, would force one to the conciusion that Lord is subject to destruction and non-omniscience.

The Bhagavata or Pancharatra School holds that God Vasudeva is both the material and efficient cause of the world. He who is superior to Nature is the Supreme Self and the Self of all and He Himself has divided Himself into many forms. His propitiation consists in going to the temples with exclusive devotion. All this is acceptable. But this school also says that of the three, Samkarshana (individual soul), Pradyumna (mind) and Aniruddha (egoism), Samkarshana originates from Vasudeva, Pradyumna from Samkarshana and Aniruddha from Pradyumna. This is not in agreement with the Sruti. If the individual soul has any origin, it will become perishable. Liberation consisting of attainment of God becomes impossible, for an effect gets destroyed on reaching back its cause. It is established that the individual soul being eternal, has no origin. As an instrument like an axe is not produced from neither the agent who uses the instrument nor another instrument, their doctrine that the individual soul, the mind and the ego are born one from the other, cannot be accepted. This contradicts the Upanishads which clearly say that the whole universe is born from Brahman. If they say that all the four forms are Vasudeva and possess knowledge, lordship etc., then there would be more than one Supreme Isvara which is redundant. Again the forms of Vasudeva cannot be limited to four only. He has infinite forms, says the Sruti. They further downgrade the Vedas when they say, 'Not finding the highest good in the four Vedas, Sandilya studied this scripture (Pancharatra)'. For all these reasons, this philosophy cannot be wholly accepted.

Section 3

This section deals with the creation of the five elements and also the nature of the individual soul.

Ether orginates from Brahman as its first effect, as stated in the Tai. Up. II-1. Although ether and air are not included in the Ch. Up. VI-2-iii where fire is mentioned as the first effect, they are implied. Similarly air, fire, water and earth originated from Brahman. But Brahman has no origin. It is not an effect of any cause. It is the creative principle abiding within all the elements. The elements, at the time of dissolution, dissolve in the inverse order, i.e., earth into water, water into fire, fire into air, air into ether and ether into Brahman. The creation of Prana, mind and senses from Brahman mentioned in the Mun. Up. II-1-iii does not interfere with the above order of creation, because these three also are effects of the elements.

Birth and death are not for the Soul. They are for the body. The Soul, in reality, is identical with Brahman. What appears to originate is only its apparent connection with the illusory limiting adjuncts of the body and the rest. Intelligence is the very nature of the Soul. The Soul is not atomic in size, but it is all-pervading. The Soul appears to be an agent or experiencer when it is connected with the intellect and other instruments of action. It ceases to be so when it is dissociated from them, like a carpenter is associated with his tools when he works and dissociated from them when he rests after laying them down. The agentship of the individual is subordinate to and controlled by the Supreme Lord. He makes the Soul to do good and bad according to its previous Karmas. Fruits such as pain and pleasure dispensed by God, depend on the nature of actions. Thus are justified the injunctions and prohibitions of the scriptures.

How is the individual Soul related to Brahman? It may be said to be a part of Brahman, the Whole, just as a spark is a part of the whole conflagration of fire. But it cannot be said to be really a part, because Brahman has no parts, He being one, homogeneous, indivisible, infinite Whole. The individual may be said to be a reflection of the Supreme. There is no plurality of souls. The plurality of souls is only a product of Avidya, ignorance, and not a reality.

Section 4

This section confines itself to the creation of the chief Prana and the organs in the body.

The organs originate from Brahman, because the Vedas say that everything comes from Brahman. The organs are eleven in number, viz., the five sense organs, the five motor organs and the internal organ, the mind. All the organs are subtle, finite and limited. The chief Prana is also produced from Brahman. The chief Prana is not the air nor the function of the organs. It is minute (Anu), subtle and not all-pervading. It is all-pervading in its universal aspect. The organs depend upon their presiding deities, but the enjoyer is the individual Soul who rules over the organs. The eleven organs, the five Pranas and the five Upa-Pranas are independent principles. They are not merely the functions of the chief Prana. Organs do not function in deep sleep, but the chief Prana does function.

The creation of names and forms is the work of the Lord and not of the individual soul.

CHAPTER III

SADHANA-SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Section I

The doctrine of incarnation, the soul's journey to higher worlds and its return to the earth, are dealt with in this Section, with a view to create dispassion in the mind of the aspirants.

The soul of the man who performs scripturally- ordained ritualistic Karmas, sacrifices and the like, after leaving this body at death, goes from the body accompanied by the subtle elements, mind, Pranas and senses. The water that is said to surround the soul is indicative of all the five elements. In Chandraloka they serve the gods there and enjoy the fruits of their good actions.

Sinners do not go to Chandraloka. They go to hellish worlds, the abode of Lord Yama. There are seven hells-Raurava, Dlaharaurava, Vahni, Vaitarani, Kumbhipaka, Tamisra and Andhatamisra, the latter two being eternal and the former five temporary. After suffering the punishments for the sinful deeds, they return to this world.

The rule regarding five oblations spoken of in the Panchagni Vidya mentioned in the Ch. Up. V-3 to 9 is not universal. It applies to those who do sacrifices and Karmas. There are instances like Drona, Dhrishta- dyumna, Sita, Draupadi and others who are not born in the usual way from wombs. The rule does not apply to sinners and evil doers, nor does it apply to those who practise meditation. In the case of the latter, they go by the northern path to Brahmaloka.

After enjoying the fruits of actions in the Chandraloka, the souls descend to the earth with a reminder of their works (Anusaya) which determine the nature of the new body to be taken here. The souls descending through ether, air, rain and the rest do

not become identical with the ether, air, etc., but remain similar to them. The time taken for the descent is short. In the stages of ether, air, smoke, mist, cloud and rain, the time is shorter than in the stages of corn, semen and foetus. In the latter three stages, the souls are beset with more difficulties and pain. Within a period of one year, the souls enter the mothers' womb.

Section 2

This section deals with the different states like dream, deep sleep and swoon and also the nature of Brahman.

The world of dream is considered not real with reference to the waking world. It is said to be mere illusion. It does not agree entirely with the waking world. It cannot be said to be completely unreal also, since some dream visions are found prophetic. Anyhow, that the creation in dream is not of the same order of reality as the creation in the waking state is the common view. The waking creation also has no absolute reality, for it disappears in dream and deep sleep states. But, before realisation of Brahman, when the waking world is considered as real, with reference to it, the dream world is said to be unreal. While Brahman is Absolute Existence, the waking world has only phenomenal or pragmatic existence and the dream world illusory existence. By meditation, one gets the Knowledge of the true nature of Brahman which bestows complete freedom from ignorance. ignorance is the cause of bondage.

In deep sleep, the Soul abides in Brahman in the heart. All statements in the scriptures regarding other places assigned for the Soul in deep sleep, should not be interpreted literally. Even the statement that the Soul has its abode in Brahman in deep sleep, has to be understood without making a distinction between the abode and the abider. There is no time when the Soul is not one with Brahman whether it is in deep sleep or

death or dream or waking state. While this identity is very clear and self-revealed in the state of deep sleep, it is, as it were, veiled by a so-called unreal world and real world projected by ignorance in the dream and waking states respectively. The experience of not knowing 'anything' in deep sleep is because of the non-dual nature of the Consciousness then, without the triad of knower, known and knowing, and not due to absence of Consciousness which can never happen. Such knowledge without the triad serves the purpose of knowing after waking the identity of oneself with Brahman. Any other knowledge, such as one may get by literally interpreting the statements, in the scriptures such as there is ignorance in deep sleep, the Soul is resting in some Nadi or pericardium during deep sleep, the soul has merged in ignorance, the soul rests in the region of the physical heart, the soul becomes one with Prana, the soul rests within the ether of the heart, etc., does not serve any useful purpose to the sincere and ardent aspirant who is after the non-dual experience of the Truth. Sri Acharya Sankara concludes his commentary on Sutra III-2-vii with the following significant remarks: "We are out to prove that Brahman is the invariable locus of sleep. Such a knowledge serves a purpose, namely that the soul is ascertained to be identical with Brahman and it is realised to be free from the dealings consequent on the dream and wakeful states, and their absence in deep sleep state. Hence, the Self is the locus of sleep (Tasmat Atmaiva supte sthanam)". The several alternative statements of the scriptures should not be left out completely without any scope, and dubbed as wrong statements. It is, therefore, concluded that in sleep, the soul passes through the Nadis and pericardium and rests in Brahman.

Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj in his commentary on the Anandamaya Adhikarana (Brahma Sutras 1-1-xii to xix) has no

two opinions on the nature of the Self in deep sleep. He affirms that the Self consisting of Bliss in deep sleep is not the individual soul with ignorance, but the Supreme Brahman Itself. But Acharya Sankara in his commentary on these Sutras, first affirms that the soul in deep sleep is Brahman Itself. Then he offers a different interpretation (correction?) and states that it is not Brahman, but the individual soul identified with the bliss sheath. It is said that the first view is that of Vrittikara (who is identified with Bodhayana by some and Upavarsha by others) who flourished before Sri Sankara, and that the second view is the view of Sri Sankara. Sri Gurudev who does not give two different views on that occasion, however in his commentary on Sutra III-2 vii gives both the views. He says: "In deep sleep the individual soul rests in Brahman, but there is a thin veil of ignorance between him and the Supreme Soul". Both the Sruti and Smriti say: "In whatever form they meditate on Him, that they become themselves". Brahma Sutra IV-3xV also says that one becomes what one resolves to be, and those meditators who entertain a resolution about Brahman alone reach Him. Under these conditions who would hesitate to meditate that in the deep sleep state the soul is one with Brahman! And who would wish to meditate that is one with the Bliss Sheath a product of ignorance! Vide also Sankara's commentary on Sutra I-IV-18.

The soul awakening from sleep is the same as the one who went to sleep. The state of swoon is half death and half sleep. Brahman is attributeless. He is said to be with attributes in the scriptures for the sake of Upasana, worship and meditation. Every form attributed to Brahman is denied. Everywhere if we dive deep into the import of the Upanishads, we would find that identity is being affirmed at every step, and not differentiation.

Everything here has Brahman for its essential true nature. Scriptural texts referring to attributes of Brahman are not completely useless. They are helpful for meditation. Even attributelessness is an attribute in one sense which helps meditation.

In the 'neti, neti-not this, not this' statement of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 11-3-vi, which is the best description of Brahman, according to the Upanishad itself, the first 'neti' nagates the gross forms and the second 'neti' negates the subtle forms mentioned in Mantra II-3-i of the same Upanishad. (Brahman indeed has only two forms or aspects gross and subtle, mortal and immortal, limited and pervasive, conceivable and inconceivable). Brahman Itself is not denied. The Bhedabheda Vada is proved to have no basis. All separateness is denied in Brahman. Brahman is one without a second, and all other statements about Brahman are metaphorical or figurative to help meditation.

Fruits of actions are dispensed by God according to merits and demerits. Fruits are not independent results acting through Apurva.

Section 3

This section deals with various Upasanas or Vidyas, and states which of them should be combined and which not, adducing reason for each case.

The following Vidyas are to be treated as one and the same. The meditator should combine all particulars stated in the different places in different contexts while practising the particular meditation:

1. Dahara Vidya occurring in Br. Up. IV-4-xxii and in Ch. Up. VIII-14 to v.

2. Panchagni Vidya described in Ch. Up. V-3 to 10 and in Br. Up. VI-2.

3. Vaisvanara Vidya dealt with in Ch. Up. V-11 to 24 is one whole meditation on the entire cosmic form and not different meditation on each part.

4. Sandilya Vidya occurring in the Vajasaneya Sakha in the Agnirahasya, Br. Up. V-6 and Ch.Up. III-14.

5. Prana Vidya mentioned in Br. Up. VI-1, Ch. Up. V-1 and 2 and VII-15, Kau. Up. II and III and Pra. Up. II and III.

6. Vidyas on Brahman described as Existence-Knowledge-Infinity, in the Tai. Up. 11-1 and as Knowledge-Bliss in Br. Up. III-9-xxvii. But attributes such as 'having joy as head', 'enjoyment as the right side', and so on, mentioned in the Tai. Up. II-V are not to be added. Similarly, the attributes Samyadvama and Satyakama in Ch. Up. IV-15-ii and VIII-1-v also, are not to be added.

7. Rejection of virtue and vice mentioned in Ch. Up. VIII-13-i, Mun. Up. III-1-iii and Kau. Up. 1-4-these should be interpreted as in Kau Up. 1-4 which says, 'his beloved relatives get the virtues and his hated relatives, the vices'. The shaking of the good and evil takes place at the moment of the soul's departure
from the body and not on the path to Brahmaloka.

8. Negative attributes of Brahman mentioned in Br. Up. III-8-viii, 11-3-vi, and III-9--xvi, Mun.Up. 1-1-vi and Il-1-il, Man. Up. 7, Tai. Up. 11-7 and similar others.

9. Meditation on the Highest Brahman mentioned in the Kath. Up. 1-3-i and Mun. Up. III-1-i

10. Meditation on the direct and immediate Brahman in Br. Up. III-4 and III-5.

11. Meditations prescribed in the Aitreya Aranyaka text II-2-4 and 6, 'now, He is the same as I am and I am the same as He is'; in the Jabala text, 'O Glorious Deity, I am what you are and you are what I am'; and in other similar contexts, should be resorted to in a twofold way.

12. The Vidyas of Satya Brahman given Br. Up. V-4-1 and V-5-ii.

13. Meditations connected with sacrificial rites, e.g. Udgitha Upasana are valid for all Branches.

In the case of those meditations on Brahman for which texts assign one and the same result, any one of them is individually as good as the others. No combination is needed. Those meditations based on symbols undertaken for the fulfilment of worldly desires, may either be combined or not combined, according to one's option, since the sameness of result does not exist. Karmanga Upasanas may or may not be combined according to one's liking.

The following meditations should not be combined, but treated as separate 1. The Udgitha Vidyas in Br. Up. 1-3 and Ch. Up. 1-2.

2. The Udgita Vidyas in Ch. Up. 1-6 and 1-9 even though they are in the same Upanishad and having the same name.

3. The Udgitha Vidyas in Ch. Up. 1-1 and the Br. Up. 1-3, owing
to difference in the object of meditation. In the latter the whole of the Udgitha Hymn is to be meditated while in the former, it is only on parts.

4. The two secret names 'Ahar' and 'Aham' in the Br. Up. V-5-iii and iv should not be combined with respect to Satya Brahman.

5. The attributes of Sambhriti (holding together its powers) and Dyuvyapti (pervasiveness in the whole sky) found in the

Ranayaniya Khila are not to be inserted in the Sandilya Vidya, Upakosala Vidya and Dahara Vidya.

6. Puruska Vidya of Ch. Up. III-16-i to vi and the Purusha Vidya of Taittiriya Aranyaka.

7. Meditations on Prana in Br. Up. 1-5-xxi and on Vayu in Ch. Up. IV-3-i to iii are separate although Prana and Vayu are said to be one in many places.

Although meditations such as Sandilya Vidya, Satya Vidya, Dahara Vidya, Vaisvanara Vidya and others teach the worship of the same Lord, they are to be considered as different owing to the difference in names and forms.

The fire altars made of mind, speech, eyes, etc., mentioned in the Agnirahasya of the Vajasaneyins (Satapatha Brahmana) are not part of the sacrificial act, but constitute a separate Vidya.

Meditations prescribed in connection with certain ceremonial rites are not compulsory. They may or may not be done.

Pranagnihotra need not be performed on days of fast.

The Kathopanishad Mantras 1-3-x and xi are to be considered as one sentence. It means that the Atman is superior to all objects, senses, mind, intellect, Hiranyagarbha and Isvara. The object of the Upanishad is not to teach any gradation of superiority or greatness among these, not to teach that the latter is higher than the former, because such knowledge does not bestow any spiritual benefit.

The Atman mentioned in the Ai. Up. 1-1-i is the Supreme Self and not any other lower or limited forms such as Hiranyagarbha, etc.

Certain detached Mantras mentioned in the beginning of some of the Upanishads do not belong to them, but they belong to the sacrificial acts.

He who realises Saguna Brahman alone goes by the Northern Path and not the knower of Supreme Brahman. Going through the Northern Path is not to be confined to those Vidyas in which
it is actually mentioned, but applied to all Vidyas of Saguna Brahman even though it is not specifically mentioned in them. Although the general rule is that the true knowledge releases one from all forms of body, yet even perfected souls may be reborn for the fulfilment of divine missions.

There is a distinction between the Soul and the body since consciousness does not exist even when the body is there as a corpse. Body is not an absolutely contributory factor in perception, since when this body is absent in dream, many kinds of perceptions are experienced. This proves the existence of the Soul distinct from the body.

Section 4

Is the knowledge of Brahman connected with performance of rituals done by one who is entitled to do them? No, is the reply. The supreme purpose is fufilled through independent knowledge enjoined in the Vedanta texts. Final emancipation is the direct result of Brahma-Vidya. Rituals and sacrifices are only indirect aids to liberation inasmuch as they purify the heart and make it fit for the dawn of knowledge. One may even do away with the Karmas and resort solely to meditation, but even then one should not abandon the duties enjoined by the scriptures.

Knowledge of Brahman is not subordinate to Karmas.

Sannyssamis is prescribed by the scriptures. For Sannyasins, Brahma Vidya is prescribed and not Karmas. They need not

purposes. rituals as Knowledge serves all
Nevertheless, the Karmas enjoined in the scriptures such as sacrifices, good conduct, etc., are useful as indirect means for Knowledge. Performance of duties of different stages of life is not needed for the fruition of Knowledge. It is needed for the emergence of Knowledge only.

Passages in the Upanishads such as those contained in Ch. Up. 1-1-iii, 1-6-i, Sat. Br. X-1-ii-ii, Ai. A. II-1-2-i are Vidhi Vakyas or injunctions. They are not mere praise, because of their newness. Stories in the Upanishads are not Pariplavas. They glorify the Vidyas concerned.

Certain relaxation in the matter of rules in taking food, allowed by the scriptures are meant only for extreme cases, e.g. when life is in danger (Ch. Up. 1-10). The statement in Ch. Up. V-2-i that for a man who knows Prana, nothing becomes uneatable, is not a license to eat all kinds of food.

Duties of Asramas are to be performed by even those who do not strive for liberation. Those who stand in between two Asramas, stages in life, are also entitled to knowledge of Brahman. Anasmmins due to poverty, etc., also have claim to Brahman Knowledge.

One who has embraced the life of continence, a Sannyasin or Naishthika Brahmacharin cannot revert back to his previous Asrama i.e., should not fall back to his prior stage of life. Expiation for a fall from the vow of celibacy is not prescribed in the scriptures. The expiatory ceremony prescribed in the Purva Mimasa requires marriage, and hence cannot apply to a Sannyasin. The expiation may apply to Upakurvana Brahmacharins. Some consider that even in the case of Naishthika Brahmacharins, the sin is a minor one excepting in the case of Guru's wife. The Smriti passage which declares that there is no expiation, aims at the utmost effort to be taken

on the part of Naishthika Brahmacharin and Sannyasin. Smriti prescribes purificatory ceremony for Vanaprasthas and Sannyasins also. Whether the lapses are major or minor, in either case, good people must shun such transgressors.

Those meditations connected with subordinate members of the sacrifice are to be done by the priest and not by the sacrificer.

Br. Up. III-5 enjoins Mauna, i.e., meditation, as a third item in addition to Balya (strength which comes of knowledge) and Panditya (scholarship). It is not said by way of praise. 'Balya' means child-like state, innocent state of mind free from passion, anger and such other traits.

Fruition of knowledge may take place even in this life, if there be no obstruction to the means adopted.

There is no difference in the final liberation. It is of one kind only.

CHAPTER IV

PHALA ADHYAYA- CHAPTER ON

THE RESULT

Section 1

Discussion on the result of enquiry on Brahman starts from the middle of the first Section, from Sutra IV-1-xiii. The earlier Sutras from IV-1-i to xii continue the subject of the previous Chapter, viz., Sadhana.

'Hearing the Truth from the teacher, reflection over it, and deep meditation on the conclusion arrived at as a result of hearing and reflection' contained in Br. Up. IV-5-vi, 'By knowing about this Self alone the intelligent aspirant after Brahman should attain intuitive knowledge' stated in Mantra IV-4-xxi of the same Upanishad, 'He is to be searched after, He is to be desired to be known' occurring in Ch. Up. VIII7-i-this Sadhana for the realisation of Brahman should be repeated till one attains the Goal. Even if the instruction in a particular place occurs only once, repetition is necessary as the Upanishads have instructed about the Sadhana repeatedly. Brahman should be realised as identical with one's own Self (Br.Up. 1-4-x, III-4-i, III-7-iii, Ch. Up. VI.8-vii, etc.). Those who practise meditation, should not identify themselves with the symbol. No one can have a meditation involving self-identification, for in all meditations the ideas of meditator, meditation and the object of meditation will remain. The fact of identity of Brahman with one's own Self and all objects, is to be realised after eliminating all mundane characteristics such as agency, experiencership and the like. In meditation the symbol should be viewed as Brahman and not the other way, Brahman as the symbol. All meditations should be practised in a sitting posture. However, there is no specific rule regarding place and time for meditation. Where and when the mind feels favourable one

should meditate. How long should one meditate? The reply is till death.

Now starts a discussion on the result. When a person attains knowledge, all his past sins are destroyed, and future sins do not cling to him. Not only sins, but also all his merits and virtues leave him. The Prarabdha Karmas are spent up only by experience. The daily obligatory works exercise a purifying influence on the heart and they are helpful to the dawn of knowledge. These regular obligatory duties, whether combined with meditation or not, help the dawn of knowledge. Having exhausted the Prarabdha Karmas, through experience, one becomes a Videha mukta on the fall of the body.

Section 2

This section deals with the mode of departure of the knower of Saguna Brahman and the ignorant man.

At the time of death, the functions of all the organs merge in the mind. Then the functions of the mind merge in Prana. Thereafter, the Prana along with the individual soul, Jiva, merges in the subtle elements. In the case of the organs and the mind, it is their functions and not they themselves that merge. But in the case of the Prana, it is Prana itself that merges and not its function alone. The merging of the Jiva with the subtle elements in the Saguna Brahman, is not the final merging. The elements continue to exist in a latent state.

The mode of departure at death is the same to both the knower of Saguna Brahman and the ignorant man. Immortality for the former referred to in the scriptures is only relative immortality and not the ultimate one. Bondage which is due to ignorance and wrong knowledge cannot be dissolved except through the supreme Knowledge.

In the case of a sage fully liberated through the knowledge of Brahman, Pranas do not depart from the body. In his case, everything including senses and the elements merge in Brahman. All the sixteen Kalas (11 organs and 5 subtle elements), of the knower of Brahman get merged absolutely in the highest Brahman.

The knower of Saguna Brahman leaves the body at the time of death through the Sushumna Nadi, the 101st nadi which passes through the crown of the head. Others, the ignorant pass through other Nadis. After leaving the body, the soul of the knower of Saguna Brahman follows the rays of the sun, i.e., goes through the Northern path, whether he dies during the day or night. The time of death is not the criterion. It is the knowledge that takes him through the 'northern path'. For the same reason, he goes through the 'northern path', whether his death happens during Uttarayana or Dakshinayana. Sri Bhishma's waiting for Uttarayana to drop his body, is explained as showing respect for the popular sentiment and also as proving the validity of the boon granted to him by his father that his death would be under his command.

Section 3

The Section deals with the 'northern path' (Uttarayana marga) which is otherwise known as the 'path of the gods' (Deva yana) and also as the 'path of light' (Archiradi Marga).

Up to the starting point of this path, the mode of departure of the soul of the knower of Saguna Brahman, and of the soul of the ignorant man, is the same. When the soul once leaves the body, they proceed through different paths, the knower through the 'northern path', the Karmin through the 'southern path' and the sinner who does neither the prescribed Karmas nor Upasana, enters lower wombs to be born and to die as moth, insects and the like.

With regard to the 'northern path', Upanishads like Chhandogya (VIII-6-v, V10-i), Kaushitaki (1-3), Brihadaranyaka (V 10 and VI-2-xv) and Mundaka (1-2-xi) describe it differently. In so doing, they do not refer to different paths. The path is only one. The particulars of the paths given in the different Upanishads, alone vary. All knowers of Saguna Brahman go through this path only, to reach the same Saguna Brahman.

Collecting all the particulars given in the several Upanishads, and arranging them in sequence, it is seen that the soul starts with (1) light, and proceeds through (2) day, (3) bright fortnight, (4) six months when the sun moves northward, (5) year, (6) world of Gods, (7) world of Vayu, (8) sun, (9) moon, (10) lightning, (11) world of Varuna, (12) world of Indra, (13) world of Prajapati, and finally reach the world of Saguna Brahman, also known by the epithets Brahma and Hiranyagarbha. All these stages such as light, day and the rest are deities conducting the soul on the path. At the stage of lightning, a superhuman being comes and guides the aspirant. The departed soul is not able to conduct itself as its organs have merged into the mind. Light, etc., are also inert. Hence, by the terms light and the rest one should know that they are not the physical objects commonly known through these words, nor worlds of enjoyment, but particular deities presiding over and identified with each of them that guide the soul to Brahma-loka.

The goal reached by the knower of Saguna Brahman is Saguna Brahman. Sage Sri Jaimini says that it is the ultimate supreme Brahman. He quotes a number of Upanishadic Mantras in support of his conclusion. But Sage Sri Vyasa, the author of the Sutras affirms that the goal reached is Saguna Brahman and not the Supreme. On the dissolution of Brahma-loka, the soul of the Knower of Saguna Brahman who by that time acquires the supreme Knowledge, attains, along with the

Saguna Brahman, that which is higher than the Saguna Brahman, viz., Para-Brahman.

This process is known in the scriptures as gradual liberation, in contrast with immediate liberation attained by Brahma Jnanins, the Knowers of the Supreme, the pure, non-dual, transcendental Consciousness.

Section 4

This concluding section of the last chapter of the Brahma Sutras deals with the attainment of the Supreme Brahman by its worshippers.

In the Ch. Up. VIII-12-iii, it is stated that: "Thus indeed does this serene, happy being become manifest (or established) in its own real form after having risen from this body and having reached the highest light". The exact significance of the term "become manifest" is discussed. The conclusion arrived at is, that the soul of the man of knowledge manifests itself just as it really is always, and not as possessed of any quality. The question arises as to what then is the difference between the earlier state of bondage and the final state of liberation. To this, it is replied that in the former state, the soul was as though bound and tainted with ignorance with its effect in the form of the experience of the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep, and in the final state, this unreal bondage ceases and the soul continues its eternal state of pure Consciousness. No fresh result however is created. It is just like saying that a man whose disease is cured, has become healthy, although health is his natural condition and not a new thing acquired. The temporary new accretion of disease has alone been removed.

The 'light' mentioned in the Mantra obviously refers to Brahman, referred to in several places as the Light of lights. The Soul now remains in a state of inseparableness. In conformity with the principle of becoming what one resolves to

be, the result of the knowledge, 'I am Brahman' is to remain one with Brahman. The water in the river and the water in the sea are always one and the same, before and after the river merges into the sea.

Sage Jaimini says that the liberated soul becomes established in Brahman with the characteristics of freedom from sin, old age, death, sorrow, hunger and thirst and with true desire. Sage Audulomi says that the liberated soul becomes established in pure Consciousness as Consciousness itself, that being its own nature. Both the sages quote the Upanishads in support of their respective positions. Sage Badarayana, the author of the Sutras gives the final conclusion that there is no contradiction in the two statements, as the former is made from the empirical standpoint and the latter from the standpoint of the Absolute.

With reference to the knower of Brahman who has reached Brahma-loka, the Ch.Up. Mantra VIII-2-i states that should he will to fulfil any desire, such as to see his forefathers, they become associated with him, at his mere wish. The question is raised as to whether in addition to the will, is there any other factor to be associated with for fulfilling the desires. The answer is none. Though in the case of the ignorant man, his will has to be supplemented with the necessary efforts to fulfil his desires, the case of the liberated soul is said to be different. His desires are unfailing. He has no ruler or controller above him. He is free to move everywhere and fulfil all desires without any effort.

To desire and fulfil the desire, this soul must have a mind, a completely Sattvic divine mind. Though he has a mind, he has however no body and organs. This is the view of Sage Badarayana. But Sage Jaimini says that the soul has a body also and that it can assume more than one body as it wishes.

Badarayana points out that since the Upanishads are seen to indicate both these views, the souls in the Brahma-loka may be of both kinds with body or without body. He also says that the mental fulfilment of desires is possible without a body as in the case of the experience of dream. In the case of the liberated soul having the body, it can fulfil the desires as in the waking state.

When the soul assumes more than one body, the other bodies so assumed also have life. They will not be like lifeless wooden puppets. It is something like one lighted candle lighting up many other candles. The soul in Brahma-loka is possessed of divine will. The Upanishadic texts affirming the absence of duality in such statements as 'then, what should one know and through what' and the like, refer to the soul in deep sleep or in Absolute union through Supreme Knowledge, and not to the souls who have attained the world of Saguna Brahman.

Om Tat Sat

STORIES FROM THE SUPREME KNOWLEDGE

The City of Benightedness.

The Poor Widow.

The Hunter-Prince.

What We Think, That We Become.

In the Examination Hall.

"I am a Tongawala".

The Exquisitely Beautiful Ring.

Searching for the Atman.

The Tenth Man.

The Secret of the All-Pervasive Nature of God.

Supreme Indifference.

Sage Ribhu and Nidagha

In Haridwar.

An Expression of God-Experience.

THE CITY OF BENIGHTEDNESS

We are in the city of benightedness, as it were. The world we live in is all darkness, though we boast ourselves in our utter ignorance that we are in a modern, scientific, atomic age. Once a guru with his young disciple was wandering from place to place. One evening they reached a city. They stopped there and sat under a tree just at the outskirts of the city. The disciple went to get some provisions to cook their meagre supper. To his surprise he found that in that city, in all shops all articles cost only twenty-five paise. Whatever you take, whatever be the nature of the article, whatever be the quality, the shopkeepers demanded only twenty-five paise per kilogram. He purchased a large quantity of wheat flour, ghee, sugar, etc. and returned to the master with a heavy head-load of provisions. He was jumping with joy. The guru enquired what the matter was for his unusual joy. Then he explained how everything in that place could be got for a mere twenty-five paise and that he had purchased a large quantity of all they required. He also suggested that they could stay in that city permanently and need not wander here and there any more. The guru thought for a second and said: "O my dear young man, we should not remain in this city even for this night. We should move immediately. Leave all your provisions and let us go to the next village to spend the night." The disciple could not understand his master and in his desire to enjoy life at the least cost, he entreated the master that they might live in that city itself at least for a few months if not permanently. The master did not relent, but rose up and started his journey. All the entreaties of the disciple were of no use. Seeing the disciple unwilling to leave the city, the master said, "O my disciple, you seem to be attached to this city. But I warn you that there is something seriously wrong here. You may remain

here if you choose. I am anyhow leaving. I once again warn you, beware." The master left the city. The disciple remained for a few months enjoying all sense pleasures got so cheap. He became healthy and hefty and gained much weight in a short time.

One day there was heavy rain and a compound wall in a house built of mud collapsed causing serious injury to a passerby. He filed a complaint to the king. The king called for the owner of the house and instituted an enquiry. The owner said that it was true that his compound wall fell on the complainant who was injured. The king at once pronounced his judgment to hang him immediately. The owner of the house pleaded not guilty on the ground that though he was the owner, the wall was built by a mason who was responsible for the incident. Hearing this, the king thought that what the owner of the house said was reasonable and the really guilty man must be the mason and not the owner who was therefore acquitted. The mason was called for and when he admitted that it was he who built the wall, the king found him guilty and once again pronounced his 'wise' judgment to hang him immediately. Now the intelligent mason also pleaded not guilty and said that though it was true that he built the wall, he was not responsible for its collapse and it was his assistant who poured excess water in the mud. Seeing reason in the statement of the mason, the king let him go and ordered the assistant to be brought at once. The assistant who admitted the defect in the mud which he prepared, it being a little too watery, was ordered to be hanged. This assistant then explained to the king that he was not responsible for the defective mud. He said: "O wise king, when I was mixing the mud, I heard a beautiful song. I looked in the direction from which the sound came. Then I found that a beautiful dancing girl on the balcony of the neighboring house was singing. I am a lover of music and my whole attention was

therefore drawn towards that girl and her music. So some additional water happened to fall into the mud. Under these circumstances, I plead not guilty." The king said, "Yes, you are quite right, you are free. You can go. Call that dancing girl." The dancing girl was brought and after the usual enquiry she was ordered to be handed. She had no excuse to give. She was taken to the execution hall and the noose was lowered. The girl's neck was too thin and the executioner found that the noose was too large for her neck. The matter was reported to the king who, after a moment's reflection, came to the 'wise' decision that the girl should be let off and he whose neck was of the same size as the noose, should be brought and hanged. A wise judgment of the wisest king! The king's officers went around the city to find that man whose neck was of the same size as the noose. After a long search they pitched upon our disciple who was enjoying life in that wonderful city. He was thin and lean when he came, but had grown fat and stout with the rich and nutritious food which he got, all for twenty-five paise. He was taken to the gallows and in spite of all his protests, the noose was lowered and was placed around his neck, because it was the command of the 'wise' king of that benighted city. At that moment, the sound 'stop', 'stop' was heard. A monk was running towards the gallows, pushing aside the people on the way. He stood before the executioner and said: "Please leave off this man and hang me in his place." All the people were astonished. A man, and that too a monk, wanting to be hanged! A strange thing indeed! They asked him the reason for his strange behaviour. He said that the matter was very secret and because they insisted, he would reveal it. He said: "I am a monk as you know and a yogin with knowledge of the future. I know that he who is hanged on this day, at this time would be born as the king of this city. Please therefore make haste. Before the lapse of the auspicious time which lasts only half an hour more, please hang me so that I may

become the king of this wonderful city. Please make haste and do not delay." The matter was reported to the ruling king who at once ran to the place of execution and said in a loud voice: "I, the king of this city, will not allow anyone else to become the next king. I alone must continue to be the king. Therefore, O executioner. please hang me immediately at this auspicious moment." It was the king's commandment and it had to be carried out. A king to be hanged on his own orders! Such a thing had not been heard of before. There was confusion and pandemonium. The monk who was none other than the Guru caught hold of his disciple's hand and dragging him disappeared from the scene. This whole story is summed up in the oft-quoted saying: "andher nagari chaupat raja, taka ser baja taka ser khaja".

This world is tilled with the darkness of ignorance where anything can happen anytime to anyone. The man who is immersed in pleasures obtains sense objects very cheaply in this world. Such a man who desists from the clarion call of the Guru and the scriptures, has always the noose of death hanging over his head to fall at any moment and strangle him. Only those who follow the scriptural instructions and have the good fortune to have the directions of a spiritual master, can practise meditation with success and transcend all worldliness resulting in supreme peace-the peace that transcends the mind and intellect.

THE POOR WIDOW

Only persons who have no real dispassion will go in for such meditations yielding lower mundane results. Their limited, impure mind full of worldly desires is not capable of aspiring for higher things. It is like the old widow who asked for merely two handfuls of cooked rice from a mighty king who was ready to give anything to her. In ancient days kings ruling small states

used to go incognito at night to get first-hand information about the condition of the subjects. On one such occasion when the king of a small state in South India was moving during night, his enemies knowing his movements followed him. The king understood that he was being pursued by some people and, he took shelter in a house in the nearby village for the night. There was only an old poor widow in that house. As was usual in those days, seeing somebody in the outer verandah the old lady extended a warm welcome and gave him a very crude bed and a Pillow. She then enquired whether he had taken his food. Getting a negative answer from the unexpected stranger-guest whose identity she did not know, she gave him a little cold rice, some buttermilk and a little condiment. He ate that frugal food and slept inside the house. Early in the morning before sunrise, he woke the lady up and bid farewell. Before leaving the house he revealed his identity to the old widow and said: "O Mother, I am very grateful to you. I consider you as my own mother. Know that I am the king of this country. I am prepared to give anything to you for saving my life from my enemies who were following me, by giving me shelter and also food for the night. Please ask for whatever you want and I am ready to grant all that you ask for." The widow was surprised to know that it was the king who was her night-guest. She thought for a while what to ask for. She was a simple rustic not in need of anything except some simple food once a day. That was all that she could think of. Therefore she told the king. "O great king, kindly grant me a handful of cooked rice from the village temple daily at noon." The king was surprised at the simplicity of the woman and then said to her: "O Mother, do you know that I am the king of this state and I can give you anything in this country. Please ask for whatever you want." The old lady thought for a moment and said. "O king, is it so? You can give me more! All right, please issue orders to give me another handful of cooked rice every night also." She could not think of more than this. Similar

is the case with those who start meditation with desire for mundane and heavenly enjoyments without knowing that the aim of human life is God-realisation. They are ignorant of the infinite Bliss. They can only think of worldly enjoyments or at the most heavenly pleasures which are but tinsels, mere straw before the Bliss of the Self. It is a pity that when God is ready to grant them Immortality and eternal Bliss, they desire and pray for worldly possessions under the deluded notion they can give real happiness.

THE HUNTER-PRINCE

Does the mind become the Atman? No. Even before, it was the Atman itself, but somehow thought it was limited and deluded. And now, through this meditation, that erroneous notion is removed. It is illustrated through the story of hunter-prince. A prince was somehow lost in the forest while still a baby. This baby was found by a hunter who took it home. There he grew to adolescence and all these years he thought himself to be a hunter and lived as a hunter. One of the messengers of the king, who was searching for the lost prince, happened to meet him after many years. The messenger recognised him as the prince, told him that he was not a hunter but the prince, the heir-apparent to the king. He believed those words, went to the capital and was crowned as king. Even so this jiva, somehow lost in the forest of this transmigratory life, thinks himself to be a poor, impotent, human being, with all the limitations. He is told by the guru and the scriptures that he is not a poor jiva as he was thinking all along but the Atman, the Lord Himself. When he realises this truth, he is said to become the Atman. Just as the hunter-prince was a prince even while he was living in the forest with the hunter-parents undergoing poverty and misery, so is the man, while considering himself bound, really the Atman who is ever free, being the Infinite which is incapable of being limited and bound. When that hunter-prince

was told about his royal descent and when he came to know that he was a prince, we say he became the prince, although he was a prince all the time.

WHAT WE THINK, THAT WE BECOME

The seekers after Truth who want to practise the vidyas should not forget the simple well-known fact that what we think, that we become. So there should be no doubt about the efficacy of meditation given in the Upanishads. The end of concentration of the mind on anything is to become one with that thing. In a high school the teacher was giving lessons to the students of the 10th class. He noticed that everyday during his period a particular student was not attentive to the lessons taught. The teacher found that the student was thinking deeply of something else. One day, after the class was over, the teacher called that boy and asked him: "What is the matter with you? You are not attending to what I am teaching here. Your mind seems to be elsewhere. I am noticing this for the last so many days." The boy admitted the fault and said: "O teacher, what you have said is true. I am at fault, but I could not help it. Though I wanted very much to attend to the lessons, I find my mind is going to my dear bull in my house which I love so much." The teacher reflected for a few minutes and then told the boy: "My dear boy, I will suggest a remedy to you. From this evening, you go to the nearby hill, sit there and think of the bull as long as you like." The boy, in obedience to his teacher's advice, started going to the hill every day. He sat there and was thinking of the beloved, beautiful bull. No other thought disturbed his mind, because he had so much love for the bull. This went on for seven days. On the eighth day he felt he had no more to think of the bull and so decided to attend the class. He went and waited outside the class. The teacher who was inside the classroom asked him: "My dear boy, did you do as I instructed?" The boy replied: "Yes, my revered teacher. I did

exactly as you advised. I was thinking of my bull alone for seven days. Now I feel that I need not think of it any more." Then the teacher said: "All right, now come in and take your seat and attend to your lessons." The boy replied: "O, revered teacher, I am unable to enter the class room, as my horns are too long and the door here is too small to allow me to enter the room." This is the result of constant concentration on the bull. The boy felt that he was the bull, which was his object of thought earlier. Such is the power of the mind. In the Upanishadic meditation we are asked to meditate on the Self either directly or indirectly with or without the help of symbols.

When our real nature is already divine, we can attain the goal more easily by fixing the mind on the Self with the help of the symbols. The reason for the distraction of the mind and lack of concentration during meditation on God, complained by the neophytes on the spiritual path, is that they have some object or other more dear and lovable than God. The thought of that object which is stronger naturally drives off the weaker thought of God. And they complain of lack of concentration. They must know that God on whom they have to meditate is the dearest and most lovable more dear and more lovable than all the objects that this world and even heavenly worlds can give. Then all distractions will cease and there will be progress in meditation.

IN THE EXAMINATION HALL

Lord Ganesa has a place in almost all temples of Lord Vishnu, Siva, Devi, etc. and He is worshipped first before one starts worshipping the presiding Deity of the temples. He is the remover of all obstacles on the path of the devotee both secular and spiritual. In the Ganapaty-upanishad Lord Ganesa is described as the Absolute Himself. This is the case with all other divinities also, and therefore one should not commit the

mistake of considering them as lower to and different from the Supreme.

Some years back a high school boy Rama Sarma by name living in the city of Madras, a worshipper and devotee of Aditya (Sun-god) was in the examination hall to answer the arithmetic question paper. He was very weak on this subject and being conscious of his weakness, became nervous as is common with many weak-minded students. Suddenly he remembered his tutelary deity Sun-god and closing his eyes for a few seconds prayed: "O Lord, if only you help me to answer this arithmetic paper today satisfactorily, I will perform a puja on a grand scale tomorrow morning." A few minutes passed, the bell rang, he was given the question paper and to his great relief and happiness, the questions were found to be very easy and he answered all the questions correctly. His happiness knew no bounds. Keeping the answer book separately, he got an additional answer book and prepared a long list of articles to be purchased for the worship of the Sun-god next morning. The total cost exceeded Rs. 100/-. He read the list again. A thought arose in his mind that the cost was a little too much. He therefore prepared another list on another sheet of the additional answer book reducing the number of items and also their quantities. The total worked out to less than Rs. 50/-. Thinking that this also was beyond his means, he prepared a third list on a fresh sheet of the additional answer book. This time the total cost had been reduced to Rs. 20/-. He was not willing to spend even that amount. Suddenly the Upanishadic statements came to his mind. The Sun-god is really the Absolute Himself. He is everything and He is the Sat-chit-ananda. How could one worship the Absolute! It is impossible because He is transcendental. All pujas and rituals are not for the Absolute which the Sun-god is. He said to himself: "Meditation on the Absolute is better than all worship of the

lower deities and from tomorrow onwards I will start meditation on the Absolute." While thus musing, the bell rang, the examiner came and collected the answer books. Our Rama Sarma also gave his book. The other one he folded and put it into his pocket. The boy left the hall very happy, happy to have answered all the questions and also for having cleverly and intelligently saved Rs. 100/-, the original estimate for the worship of the Sun-god. But as soon as he reached home he was shocked to find that the answer book in which he had rightly answered all the questions was in his pocket. What happened was that when the bell rang and the examiner came to collect the answer books, instead of giving the answer book, in the hurry of the moment he gave the additional answer book in which he had prepared the different estimates for the puja which he had finally abandoned.

The Lord is in the heart of all of us. He knows our most secret thoughts. Any upasana (worship and meditation) on any of the deities is helpful to purify the mind and prepare it for the dawn of Brahma jnana, the supreme Knowledge which is non-different from the Absolute. Such upasanas should be done with utmost faith (sraddha). They not only bestow the fulfilment of desires here and hereafter, but also help the attainment of the ultimate liberation.

I AM A TONGAWALA

One day a monk was sitting with eyes closed, on the bank of the Ganga and was chanting the mantra 'aham brahma'smi'.

A sage who had realised the Truth but was earning his livelihood by driving a tonga (a light two-wheeled vehicle drawn by a horse) happened to go near him. He heard the monk chanting the mantra. In order to instruct him on the highest Truth, this tongawala-sage sat near him and started repeating loudly, "I am a tongawala", "I am a tongawala."

(Tongawala means driver of a tonga.) This loud voice of his disturbed the monk's meditation and he opened his eyes to know the cause of the disturbance. He saw an ill-clad chap sitting near him and making the sound. The monk enquired of him: "Who are you?" He said: "I am a tongavala." "Then why do you go on repeating "I am a tongawala-asked the monk. He calmly rejoined: "O monk, why do you repeat 'I am Brahman'? Are you not already Brahman?" This reply of the tongavala- sage immediately caused the flash of illumination in the monk.

The scriptures are intended for the qualified disciples who feel that they are in ignorance and that they want liberation at any cost. It cannot be said that the ignorance and the superimposition posited on the non-dual, infinite Absolute and then removed through a process of de-superimposition and through the saving knowledge 'I am Brahman', are out of place. On the other hand, they are the only methods by which the ever-attained is attained as it were. The ultimate truth therefore is that even when man erroneously imagines himself to be the ignorant jiva, he is really the Infinite Brahman.

THE EXQUISITELY BEAUTIFUL RING

Many know and also say that God has created this world and everything here is His. But they do not reflect over the import of their statement and the consequent conclusions that would eventually follow when they accept and realise its full implication.

In olden days India consisted of a number of independent states each ruled by a king. There was a small state in North India. The people there were poor but religious. The king also was a staunch believer in God, but like his people he never cared to know the truth about God whom he believed to be the creator and the protector of this world. Among the many artisans in the capital city of that state there was an expert

goldsmith. One day he finished his work on a ring. It happened to be a most exquisitely beautiful ring. People started crowding in his small shop to see the wonderful beauty of the ring. All without exception admired the workmanship and the skill of the goldsmith and the beauty of the ring. Among the people there was a Fakir, a Sufi saint, who also examined the ring and admired its alluring appearance. Returning the ring to the goldsmith, he said: "This ring is divinely charming. It is fit to adorn the finger of God alone. Please put the ring on God's finger for a while." So. saying he stretched his hand and showed his ring-finger. The goldsmith put the ring on his finger.

All the persons sitting in the shop seeing this were greatly offended at the words of the saint. How can this half-naked Fakir claim to be God?-was their question. They took the whole incident as a great offence against God. The matter was reported to the king. He became very angry and after consulting his ministers, ordered that the Fakir should be executed for the sin of blasphemy.

He was taken to the gallows to be hanged. Before the noose was put on his neck, he was told on enquiry that the charge against him was the sin of claiming Godhood by saying that his finger was God's finger. The wise Fakir admitted the 'sin' and accepted the punishment awarded for it. He, however, requested the authorities to permit him to see the king and put a few questions to him. This request was granted, as it is the usual custom to fulfill the last desire of such convicted persons before they are executed.

He was taken before the king. Thinking that he had come to ask pardon, the king said: "You are an infidel, a heretic. You have claimed to be God. Thereby you have sinned against Him. There is no question of pardoning for such a serious

crime." Then followed a conversation between the king and the Fakir which is interesting and instructive.

Fakir: Your Highness, please permit me to ask a few simple questions.

King: Yes. You can ask.

Fakir: Whose is this world?

King: It is God's: who else can be its owner!

Fakir: Whose is this country?

King: God's.

Fakir: To whom do 'You' belong?

King: God, certainly.

Fakir: Who created your body, the limbs, the mind and the intellect'?

King: God Himself; God has made all this; all is His alone.

Fakir: Now you admit that the whole world, including you and me and all others, belongs to God and that everything is His. Then O king, is not this finger of mine His?

The king was greatly puzzled when he heard this simple argument of the wise Fakir. He now realised the implication and import of the statement that it is God who has created this world and everything here is therefore His alone. As God is infinite, there cannot be a division in Him as God and God's. Everything is He alone.

SEARCHING FOR THE ATMAN

This maya is non-different from the supreme Being, and hence as that Being itself, it is real. But when separated and conceived as something different from the Being, as the cause of this world, a separate entity again, then it is said to be unreal.

When this cause is unreal, its effect-this world, also is unreal. But the truth which one should not forget in meditation is that this world-the effect being non-different from Brahman-its cause, is as real as Brahman, because it is Brahman itself-the Atman in all. This reality of Brahman transcends the phenomenal reality and unreality. Being the Atman in all, It is the innermost Self pervading every atom, every cell in the meditator also. It is non-different from the meditator and non-external to him. What is the difficulty in knowing It and realising It! But the vast majority feel as though it is an impossible task to realise their own Self. This is due to the wrong methods followed by them. It is illustrated through an interesting incident that happened to a thief who wanted to steal the purse from a passenger in a train.

A rich merchant was travelling in a train with a heavy purse. A crook, who somehow came to know that the man was having a large sum of money with him, purchased a ticket and managed to get comfortable accommodation in the same compartment just on the opposite bench. The train moved. During the day the merchant opened his purse several times for sundry purchases, and the thief who was stealthily watching all his movements had the confirmation that the man was having considerable money in the purse. The merchant, being very shrewd, knew that the man on the opposite bench was not a bona fide traveller but a crook who had come to rob him of his money. So he was on his guard. Night came. Both of them spread their beddings and retired for rest. The thief did not sleep, because he wanted to take the purse after the merchant had gone to sleep. Therefore he pretended as though he was sleeping. The merchant also appearing as though sleeping, was watching the thief. After midnight the thief slowly got up and searched for the purse of the merchant in his coat pockets, in his box, under his bed, every nook and

corner. He could not get at it. Disappointed he returned to his bed and slept. The next day also the merchant opened his purse a number of times and the thief was wondering where he could have kept it during the previous night. He thought that that night he would surely get it. But that night also he could not find it in spite of his thorough search. The next day dawned. The destination arrived and both of them got down. The thief could not control himself because of his miserable failure in his attempt. He had never met with such a failure in the past. He thought that he had been fooled by the clever merchant. He caught hold of the merchant's hand, just as a friend would do when they had to part and asked him directly: "My dear man, where were you keeping your purse during the two nights? I searched everywhere and could not find it." The merchant smiled and said: "O, I knew you were a crook who had come to steel my purse. Therefore I kept it safely under your pillow." The thief was abashed and suddenly disappeared in the crowd.

We are making the same mistake. We are searching for the Atman-which is one with us and one with everything, which is seated in the 'heart'--as though It is an object or person external to us. This is the mistake.

THE TENTH MAN

What is the result of this meditation? bhidyate hridaya granthih chhidyante sarva-samsayah, kshiyante cha'sya karmani tasmin drishte para'vare-All the knots of the heart are broken, all doubts are cleared, all karmas are dissipated, when the meditator realises that he is Brahman, both the transcendental and the immanent. He directly experiences without the intervention of the mind and organs, that his purified intellect is the place for Its realisation, and that everything else here is illumined by the consciousness of Brahman. Brahman is free

from any taint. He is without parts, is the Light of all lights and is not revealed by any other light as He is ever self-revealed. The meditator on Brahman experiences that He alone is all that is in front and behind, all that is on the right as well as the left, above and below-all is He Himself. He realises the great truth that the world is nothing but Brahman, the Absolute-brahmaiva-idam visvam-idam varishtham.

What actually happens in the meditator finally, is difficult to communicate in words. Scriptures therefore give a number of analogies through which one can have an intellectual peep into that state. But one has to experience It oneself to clear all doubts. One such analogy is the story of the tenth man. Once ten persons were on this side of the Ganga and wanted to cross the river and go to the other side. There was no boat. Therefore they decided to swim across the river. All jumped into the river and reached the other side safely. Now a doubt arose in one of them that some one among them might have been lost in the river. This doubt suddenly gave rise to fear which in its turn caused confusion in his mind. To verify, he started counting. He counted all the nine. Because of his confused mind he forgot to count himself. This omission led him to confirm his doubt about the loss of one person in the river. This confirmation of doubt gave rise to grief. The others, by hearing the news of the loss of one among them, were also alarmed and therefore confused. They also started counting to verify the conclusion of that man. They also committed the same mistake because of their muddled state of mind caused by the news of the death of one among themselves. All of them,
now in a state of excitement and grief started wailing. They beat their breasts and cried. Some passerby saw this-so many persons crying and sobbing. He enquired the cause of their grief. They related the whole incident: how they, altogether ten in number, crossed the river by swimming and how they have

found out that one among them was washed away by the current. That man at a glance found that they were ten in number. Then he said to them: "O, my friends, the tenth man is not lost." This statement gave them some relief. But they had still the doubt, for all of them had counted and come to the conclusion about the loss of the tenth man. In order to cleat their doubt, he asked them to count again. One amongst them started counting. He counted all the nine and stopped. Then the other man told him: "You are the tenth man." He was then convinced of the truth that none was lost and he himself was the tenth man who he thought was lost and for whom he was grieving. Similar is the case of man searching for his own Self who he somehow thinks is not, because It is not seen. In this confused state of mind he goes here and there, does all sorts of actions-secular and spiritual-to find his own Self. Through the instructions of the guru and through reflection and meditation he realises that the Self whom he was searching for is he himself, nay, It is the Self in all, present everywhere, in every conceivable object. He realises his earlier foolishness which now vanishes immediately. He becomes wise. He realises that all along he has been the Self alone and was never otherwise.

SUPREME INDIFFERENCE

There was an old man living in a small hut in a village near the mountains. He had with him his only son. He was a poor farmer. He had only one horse to call his own. He was earning his livelihood with that horse, by using it for carrying loads and also persons, tilling the soil, pulling carts and so on. One day the horse ran away into the forest and disappeared. The villagers hearing this news went to the man to condole with him for the great loss. They pitied his position and expressed their sympathy. They said: "O poor man, how unfortunate you are! You have lost your only horse. What are you going to do now

to earn your daily bread? We are all sorry for you." Hearing this the poor man merely remarked: "Is it so?" A few days passed. One morning when the man came out of his hut, he saw his horse standing near the gate along with another horse. Hearing that the man had got two horses, the neighbours and others in the village ran to him to congratulate him. They said: "How fortunate you are! You have now not only got back your horse but also obtained a new one. You are really very lucky. We have come to congratulate you." The man now also did not make any comment but merely said: "Is it so". Now the new horse had to be trained. His son was entrusted with this work. One day while riding, the horse threw him down. He had a fracture in one of his legs. This news spread throughout the village and all people came to sympathise with him for this unfortunate incident. Now also this man did not say anything. He as before remarked: "Is it so". Days and months passed. The young son was treated. He was cured but could not walk properly as before. He had to limp. One year passed. A war broke out in the country and there was conscription. Young men were being recruited for the army. The authorities came to this village also and recruited all the young men in all the houses. But when they came to this old man's hut, they were disappointed. The son was young, hefty and healthy, but was limping.

Therefore he was not recruited. Hearing this all the villagers who had 'lost' their sons, came to congratulate our old man. They said: "O man, you are really very fortunate. We have to send our dear sons to the army. We do not know what will happen to them. We feel so miserable. But you are lucky." To this also, the old man said the same three words: "Is it so". This old man, a rustic without any education in the modern sense of the term, had a balanced mind which did not react to the external circumstances-favourable or unfavourable. Loss of

his only horse, gaining of two horses, a serious fracture in one of the legs of his only son making him almost lame for the rest of his life, and the exemption given to his son from compulsory conscription-all these did not affect his mind which was always calm. This extraordinary calmness of the mind must have been the result of his spiritual sadhana in his past lives, in the form of meditation.

SAGE RIBHU AND HIS DISCIPLE NIDAGHA

The following account of how the great sage Ribhu led his devotee-disciple Nidagha to the highest illumination was once given by Bhagavan Ramana to his devotees: Though Ribhu instructed his erudite and intelligent disciple Nidagha on the highest Truth, the latter did not get sufficient conviction, and therefore returned home and led a life of devoted, ritualistic worship. But the great devotion of the disciple to the Master and the Master's infinite love for the disciple continued as before. Ribhu therefore used to visit the disciple in his house to know how far he was progressing in his march towards the knowledge of Truth. Ribhu always used to go in disguise. On one occasion, he disguised himself as an aged rustic, in torn clothes and went to see his disciple. He saw him watching the king's procession in front of his house. The 'rustic' asked him: "My dear young man, what is it that you are watching?" Nidagha replied: "The king's procession." Rustic: "But where is the king?" Nidagha: "There, on the elephant." Rustic: "I see the two, the king and the elephant; but which is the king and which is the elephant?" Nidagha exclaimed: "What! You are seeing the two, but you do not know which is the king and which is the elephant! The man above is the king and the animal below is the elephant. You seem to be a great idiot." Rustic: "Pray be kind to me, a rustic, an aged and ignorant man. One more doubt and that is this: You said, the man 'above' is the king and the animal 'below' is the elephant'. I have understood who is

the king and which is the elephant. But I have not understood what you mean by 'above' and 'below'." Nidagha who had lost all patience burst out: "Words cannot convince you, O dull-witted man; I will explain the matter through action. Please bend forward and you will know what is 'above' and what is 'below'." The Rustic did as he was told. Nidagha climbed on his shoulders and sitting there as though riding an elephant said: "Now, know that I am 'above' and you are 'below'. Is it clear?" Rustic: "One more doubt, my dear young man. Please bear with me. What is 'above' and 'below' is now clear to me. You said 'I' am above and 'you' are below. Pray tell me what you mean by 'I' and 'you'."

When Nidagha heard this, it is said illumination dawned on him, like a flash of lightning. He recognised his spiritual Master in the rustic. He jumped down, fell at his lotus feet and craved for pardon for the disrespectful way of his behaviour. Here, though Nidagha had heard a lot about the 'I' and 'you' and their identity as the Self from his Master before, while he was staying with him, its realisation did not come to him then because of the obstruction in the form of ignorance, desire and action.

This obstruction was removed by his upasana-devoted worship and meditation which he practised in his house. And the question put by the master-"What do you mean by 'I' and 'you'?"-at once caused the dawn of the knowledge of their identity, the identity of the subject and object which are only manifestations of the non-dual Atman-Brahman.

IN HARIDWAR

Any spiritual seeker following the path of knowledge (jnana-marga) has to carefully study the nature of the dream state. Here is an analysis of the dream experience which throws a flood of light on the nature of the waking state. One should not

forget the fact that while dreaming it appears as a waking state, nay, it is a waking state and not dream. Generally while dreaming, nobody knows that he is dreaming.

One day, I was at Haridwar, in an Ashram near the Ramakrishna Mission Hospital at Kankhal. An aged Swamiji was conducting a bhajan. I was told that the Swamiji was a revered mahatma who was not only a vedavit (a knower of the Vedas), but also a Brahma-nishtha (one who is established in Brahman). I attended the inspiring kirtans of the great Swamiji which concluded with the song of Sri Sadasiva Brahmendra Swami-sarvam brahma-mayam. There was perfect silence, a divine peace and calm for some time. Then many put questions and Swamiji answered them to their entire satisfaction. Some raised their doubts on very intricate problems of Vedanta and Swamiji Maharaj cleared them with ease and clarity. In the end the following conversation took place between Swamiji and myself.

I Most Revered Maharaj, certain scriptures and sages like your Holiness say that this waking state is only a long dream. But, Maharaj, I am unable to understand how it can be as unreal and fleeting like the dream. Now I am sitting before your holiness and you are speaking to me. How can this be a dream?

Swamiji: Yes, I can understand your difficulty. You must have sraddha, an unshakable faith in God, scriptures and sages and their sayings and also on the Goal promised by them which is nothing less than complete freedom and eternal Peace, the Peace that transcends intellectual understanding. The English word 'faith' means trust, belief, confidence. The Sanskrit word sraddha which I have used now in this context, means all these and much more and it relates to the Self. Many modern men think that they are rational and look down upon faith which they

often call blind faith of the uneducated, ignorant rustics. If any reasonable man of ordinary intellect studies what happens in practical day-to-day life, he will realise that all beings live on faith alone all the twenty-four hours of the day and that faith plays a very important role in every situation in everyone's daily life. To cite only a few instances-while you are going in a car, don't you have complete faith in the driver! If there is any slight want of faith in him, you will certainly get down and prefer to walk, whatever be the distance to be covered. While you are taking a cup of tea in a hotel, don't you have faith in the cook who has prepared the tea, that he has not mixed any poison in the tea? When you are seated in a barber's chair and the barber has his razor at your throat, do you entertain any want of faith in him that he would not cut your throat? Such examples are legion. If only you reflect, you will see that the whole of life runs and depends on faith. All relationships are based on faith. So I want you to have faith, sraddha, in the scriptures and Masters also. I tell you from my own experience that this state now we are experiencing appearing as a waking state to both of us, is not a waking state; it is a dream.

I: Maharaj, then am I sleeping now? One dreams only when one is asleep.

Swamiji: Yes. You are sleeping and also dreaming. This satsang including you and me is in your dream. I tell you again I am stating the truth based on my experience which has the concurrence of the scriptures. Believe me. Have sraddha. Reflect over what I have said. You will realise the truth that all the three states-waking, dream and deep sleep-are dream only and the Self is the substratum for them, even as water is the substratum for the disturbed ocean with boisterous billows, mild ripples, foam and bubbles, and also for the calm ocean.

My doubt was not cleared. But the Swamiji suddenly left the satsang hall and people started dispersing. I also moved out of the hall and was walking on the road reflecting as to how the waking state could be a dream state.

And lo! I woke up from my dream. I found myself on my bed in my room at Rishikesh. The whole dream was very clear in my mind to the minutest detail. The train of thoughts which passed through my mind then was something like this: Now I am in the waking state. I was dreaming till now. When I was dreaming I mistook it for the waking state. What that Swamiji in the dream said was true. He said more than once that he was telling the truth based on his own experience. I was wrong in thinking it was a waking state. It was a mistake on my part to have doubted his wise words. Now I realise my mistake. It was a dream and not a waking state. The present waking state also must be like that. It must be my dream and I mistakenly think that it is a real waking state. My Gurudev also has said to me not once or twice but a number of times that the waking state is a long dream. But I had been so far doubting his statement and I was not convinced. Now I realise that my Gurudev's statement is similar to the dream-Swamiji's statement. I should no more entertain any doubt about it. I have learnt a lesson from my yesternight dream. I should not repeat the mistake again. Let me go to my Gurudev to get further clarification and confirmation.

Rest of the night I could not sleep. for the new conviction to which I arrived, viz. that this waking state is also a dream, went deep in my consciousness and I felt as though I had hit upon a hidden treasure, a treasure of knowledge. In the morning, I got up early and ran to Gurudev's kutir His Holiness was then just coming out of his kutir after his morning meditation. I immediately fell at his feet and paid my usual obeisance. He accosted me with his usual smiling face and said.

Gurudev: O my dear disciple. how is it that you are here so early today. Have you anything special to tell me, any doubt to clear about your yesterday's dream?

1: Yes, Gurudev. Last night I saw a dream and the experience there has convinced me about your repeated instructions about the nature of this waking state. (Then I submitted to him in detail all about the dream and the train of thoughts I had after waking).

Gurudev: I already know all about your dream. Now, what is your conclusion?

1: I have now come to the firm conclusion that the waking state is a dream. I have learnt the truth. I have no more doubt that both the so-called waking and dreaming states that we experience everyday are only dreams, passing experiences, transient in nature without any substantiality.

Gurudev: Who is the experiencer of the two dreams?

I: The visva and taijasa.

Gurudev: Who are you then? What is "your" place, the "I" in you?

I: The 'I' is the Witness of the two states.

Gurudev: What about the third state, the deep sleep state?

I: The 'I' is the Witness of that experience also.

Gurudev: Was there any experience in deep sleep to be witnessed by the 'I'?

I: Certainly not. Then how can the 'I' be said to be the witness, when there is nothing to be witnessed?

Gurudev: Yes. That is exactly what I want you to realise. The 'I' is not even the witness. Are you clear about this'? The sakshi-bhava also has to be transcended.

1: By your grace things are becoming clear. I am now certain that the 'I' transcends the witnessship in deep sleep.

Gurudev: Then, is the 'I' a witness during the two dream states'? What have you understood by the epithet 'dream'? Does anything happen there? Take one incident in the dream and analyse. For instance, yesterday night did you go to Haridwar and meet that great Swamiji? No, you did not. Nothing happened. If that is the case with one incident, it must be so with all the incidents in yesterday's dream. It must be so in the dreams that we seem to experience everyday. You are already convinced that the waking state also is a dream. Therefore you have to come to the conclusion that in both the states-the so-called waking and dream-nothing happens and therefore there is nothing to be witnessed by the 'I'. Hence the 'I' cannot be said to be a witness in all the three states. You must know that the 'I' is Sat-chit-ananda, the pure Existence-Consciousness-Bliss-Absolute, during all the three states, whether it is deep sleep without the appearance of the world including one's own individual personality, or the two dream states where there seems to be an appearance of the world including one's individual personality. The 'I' is like the water of the ocean of Consciousness whether the ocean is calm or with waves and ripples. This is referred to as the 'cosmic waters' in some scriptures, as that which was (is?) before the so-called creation.

Hearing these words of Gurudev, I was fully convinced of the truth and thenceforth the demon of doubt disappeared once and for all.

Dear readers, now that you must have understood that there is no difference between waking and dreaming experiences, i.e. between the phenomenal real (vyavaharika-satta) and the phenomenal unreal (pratibhasika-satta), both being the

expression of the Consciousness-Absolute (paramarthika-satta), I don't think that you would raise the question: "O Swamiji, is the 'I' referred to in the above incident, who had the experience of the Haridwar-dream and shader the subsequent clarification from Gurudev, you yourself or is that 'I' and the whole incident your fertile imagination?" In either case, it is a dream and therefore unreal. But if you still insist on an answer to the question, I would raise the counter-question: "O my dear readers, the 'you', the 'T', your question, my counter-question, and the answer-are these in the waking state or dreaming state or deep sleep state, or are they in the Absolute Consciousness as Its expressions or Itself?" And I myself will give the answer: "They are as they are: the Atman-Brahman is the all, yet none of these, and transcends all these, their presence and their absence."

AN EXPRESSION OF GOD-EXPERIENCE

The time is Brahma Muhurta, between 4 a.m. and 6 a.m. It is a cold chilly morning in the month of January. A gentle cool breeze is blowing over the sacred Ganga. A sincere spiritual Sadhak is sitting in Padmasan over a comfortable seat of Kusa grass, deer skin and a thick woollen blanket spread one over the other, on a flat rock, on the bank of the Ganga. His whole body, excepting his face, is covered over with a woollen shawl. His eyes are half closed and he is absorbed in deep meditation, Nididhyasana. Like the effulgent light spreading forth from the sun, spiritual aura is seen emanating from him.

He is not one among the several neophytes in the spiritual path seen here and there sitting and meditating on the Ganga bank, but a far advanced, mature saint, a very rare soul who has ascended all the steps of the spiritual ladder and reached the last one which also he wants to transcend to reach that limitless Great Beyond, that Supreme Peace which, as the

Upanishads put it, is That from which the mind and speech return baffled unable to reach It. He has been sitting in that posture unmoved like a rock, for nearly an hour and a half. Some thoughts suddenly rush in, in that calm serene lake of his mind. He says to them, "Get away, get away, I want to see God and why do you come here and block my way?". A moment passes. And lo! the very same thoughts shed their veil and appear as the pure Consciousness, the Supreme Truth, which he has been seeking all along. The seeker and the sought now become one. The process of seeking also merges in that one Consciousness. The drop has merged in the ocean; transcended themselves. He remains in this supreme, sublime height of Super-consciousness in its transcendental aspect, for a long time, perhaps a few hours.

The individual and the universal have

The sun has risen and is illumining the whole earth. The saint comes down, as it were, from his spiritual heights to realise, as clearly and distinctly as an apple in one's palm, the truth of the all-comprehensive nature of God. He sees God expressing Himself as his individual body and mind, as the whole world at large, as everything here the so-called real, unreal and the void. All thoughts, words, deeds and objects now reveal themselves to him as God. He himself is none other than God.

This last stage in one's march towards the spiritual Goal is most picturesquely described in four simple verses preceding the famous Manisha Panchakam, a quintuplet on Wisdom by Acharya Sankara. These verses dramatise an incident that took place one day in the Acharya's life, so beautifully, that any Sadhak who reads and re-reads them will not fail to visualise before his eyes a clear picture of that unique incident enacted in one of the narrow lanes of Varanasi on the bank of the Ganga, leading to the great temple of Lord Viswanath. Deep enquiry and Nididhyasana on the import of these verses,

hidden behind the words and between the lines, will surely result in the realisation of the Truth.

The great Acharya Sankara, the greatest expounder of the Advaita philosophy, referred to by his followers and devotees as Sri Sankara Bhagavadpada, and considered by them as an incarnation of Lord Siva, flourished in the first quarter of the 9th century A.D.

Once, Sankara was staying in the city of Varanasi. One day we see him, after his early morning bath in the holy Ganga, walking along the narrow street leading to the temple of Viswanath. A low-born man, an outcaste, clad in dirty and torn rags, with his equally ill-clad wife, hand in hand, suddenly appears facing the Acharya and blocking the narrow passage to the temple. The Acharya asks the couple to get away, to move to one side, so that he could proceed onwards to have the Darshan of the Lord.

The couple is really Lord Siva and his spouse Shakti-Purusha and Prakriti-the two inseparables in disguise, for whose Darshan he is walking towards the shrine of Lord Visvanath. There is a common adage that when the devotee takes one step towards God, God takes ten steps towards him to give His Darshan. God will not allow His devotees to undergo the trouble of walking the whole distance. For, is He not the ocean of compassion?

Anyone else, hearing the words of the great Acharya shining with spiritual effulgence, would have moved to one side of the path and given way to him, But this outcaste couple's reaction to the words of the Acharya is unique. They do not move an inch, but stand on the very spot. The "ill-clad, low-caste man" now puts a question to the Acharya.

"Oh wise man! There are only two things here, matter and Consciousness. Your body, my body and the space in

between, and everything in this universe is made up of the same matter, the five elements. This universe is one organic whole.

Even if you and I are considered as parts of that whole, how can this body of mine get out of the whole?! One thing cannot get away from another, as both are in this indivisible homogeneous whole. It is impossible. As regards Consciousness, it is also all-pervasive and indivisible. How can the Consciousness in me move away from the Consciousness in you and in the whole universe?! So, that also is well-nigh impossible.

"Oh great one! The effulgent sun in the sky is reflected in both the pure water and in the polluted dirty water. Is the sun in any way affected by the reflections? Is the sun purified by the pure water or polluted by the dirty water? The reflection has no existence as something different from the original. When seen separately, it is unreal and non-existent. Oh wise one! There is space inside a golden pot and a mud pot. The former, the golden pot, is costly, shining and used for taking water for holy worship in temples; while the latter, the mud pot, is cheap, dirty and used in the toilette. But, does this in any way affect the space inside the two pots, the space which is one, homogeneous, undivided, all-pervasive, and unaffected and untouched by anything and everything that it contains! Similarly, when this Atman, the pure Consciousness, nameless and formless, and at the same time, having all the names and forms, looks as though it is contained in your body and our bodies, like drops contained in the vastela waveless ocean of Bliss-Consciousness, how can the delusion of the difference and separateness arise in it?"

When these few words of wisdom fall on the ears of the Acharya, he instantaneously recognises that the 'low-caste

couple' is no other than Lord Siva with His Shakti. He falls at their feet and washes them with his tears of bliss. He is raised by the Lord Himself. When the Acharya looks up, he sees Lord Siva with his consort Parvati, in their divinely beautiful and sublime form. The Lord embraces him. The individual merges in the Cosmic. There is no Acharya separate from the Lord and His Spouse. Acharya Sankara, Lord Sankara and Shakti-all the three are now one, the pure Awareness. The I, God and the world are now realised as one, non-dual, pure Consciousness.

A few moments pass. The Acharya finds himself standing alone on that narrow path. There is no one there except those persons who, like him, are on their way to the temple. He goes to the temple, and after worship there, returns to his residence.

Thereafter, he gives expression to His God-experience in five verses which have come to be known as Manisha Panchaka. These five verses express in human language the divine experience. A doubt may arise whether God and God-experience can be expressed in words. There is no room for such doubt when one realises the fact that all words are His expressions only. God manifests Himself as the world of names, forms and action. God and the world are not different. This is illustrated in the Murti of Ardhanarisvara, where God is depicted half as Purusha and half as Prakriti. A mere outline of the contents of the five verses expressing the God-experience of the Acharya, is attempted in the following paragraphs:

"God expresses Himself very distinctly through the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep, by pervading the whole creation, and remains as the Witness. One should have the firm conviction, 'I am He'.

"The 'I' is God alone, as also the whole universe which is nothing but an expansion of pure Consciousness. That which is considered as not God, as different front Him, as the three

Gunas and their effects, is my superimposition due to ignorance.

"Having come to the firm conviction through one's Master's instructions that a universe seen separate from God, as other than Him, is ever perishable, one should practise continued reflection through one's own calm, pacified mind, on the eternal God-Consciousness, which fills the universe leaving no space whatsoever devoid of It. Then, what happens to such a man? All his Sanchita and Agami Karmas are burnt out, without any trace, in that fire of pure Consciousness, leaving the Prarabdha Karmas to be experienced by his body which also falls when they are exhausted.

"The Supreme God shines as the inner most 'I' in all beings, illumining the body, the organs and the mind which are by nature inert. They shine through the power of God's consciousness alone. The effulgence of the sun appears to cover the resplendent orb of the sun. What is the truth? The very existence of the former depends on the latter, for we are able to see the effulgence because of the sun. Similarly, though this world is considered as something other than God, which covers or veils God, really speaking, this world is His glory which eternally reveals Him-by its presence in the waking and dream states and by its absence in the deep sleep state and Samadhi. Thus meditating, one gains fulfilment and one enlightens others.

"All the celestials revel in an infinitesimal part of a drop, a flying spray over the ocean of the infinite Bliss which is God, while the sage of perfection is immersed in that ocean of Bliss and remains quiescent in the pure Awareness. His intellect slides, or melts, as it were, into the eternal ocean of Bliss to become one with it. He is now no more a knower of Brahman. Then what is he? The Acharya says, from his own direst experience,

that such a person is Brahman Himself and that his holy feet are worshipped by all the gods. But, such souls are very rare in this world". Thus concludes Sankara's quintuplet on God-experience.

Indeed, souls who have scaled the stupendous heights of God-experience are very rare. But, at no period in history, the world was wanting in such great souls. Even in this Kali Yuga, in the fag-end of the Twentieth Century, in this scientific or atomic age, we have had and still have a few such God-men walking on the face of this earth. One such rare soul we had in our midst was our most revered Gurudev H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, who, through his own personal life and work, had conveyed to the whole of the aspirant world the Supreme Truth that this world is nothing but God.

Glory to such sages, glory to the scriptures, glory to the

Supreme Knowledge! Glory to God!!

Glory to our Divine Master!!!

Om Tat Sat.

APPENDIX

GURU AND THE GREAT BEYOND

(TAKEN FROM "REVELATION OF THE EVER-REVEALED")

In addition to the fourfold qualifications, 1 unflinching devotion to one's spiritual preceptor is also insisted for spiritual aspirants, for quick spiritual progress. Some aspirants who have great devotion to God and firm faith in the scriptures, may lack the required intensity in their devotion t their spiritual preceptor. This is caused by their unpurified lower mind which noticing the preceptor's Cheshtas (instinctive activities of the physical body) and finding no difference in them from their own actions, rank him as one among themselves. They fail to understand the real Guru in the personality of the preceptor. This is a great danger in spiritual path. The Svetasvatara Upanishad states that the ultimate Truth reveals Itself only in that high-souled one who has supreme devotion to his spiritual preceptor. Those who lack this requirement are disqualified to study the Vedantic texts, as this impurity of the intellect would stand in the way of realising the most subtle truths contained therein. The Secret of all secrets remains a secret to such aspirants. Hence, we find great spiritual texts even if made available through printing and free distribution, continue to remain as closed books

'Discrimination between the Atman and the not-Atman, real dispassion born out of such discrimination, the six virtues (viz., tranquility of mind, control of the senses, calmness, endurance, faith in one's preceptor and the scriptures and one-pointedness of mind), and an earnest and burning aspiration to get out of this Samsara.

among the majority. The egoism which persists in the aspirants till they leave back the last rung of the spiritual ladder, is likely

to push them down the steps at any moment, unless they are extremely vigilant and watchful at every step. Any slight inadvertence is enough to cause a great and immediate fall, even as a ball dropped unawares at the top-most step of a staircase falls down on the ground in no time. Complete surrender to God and one's own spiritual preceptor who are not really different from one's own Self, can alone save one from such a catastrophe. A fall of the aspirant from spiritual heights is more dangerous and painful than a fall of the physical body from great mountain heights. For, in the latter, harm is caused only to one body, while in the former, it results in suffering in the form of transmigratory life in several bodies.

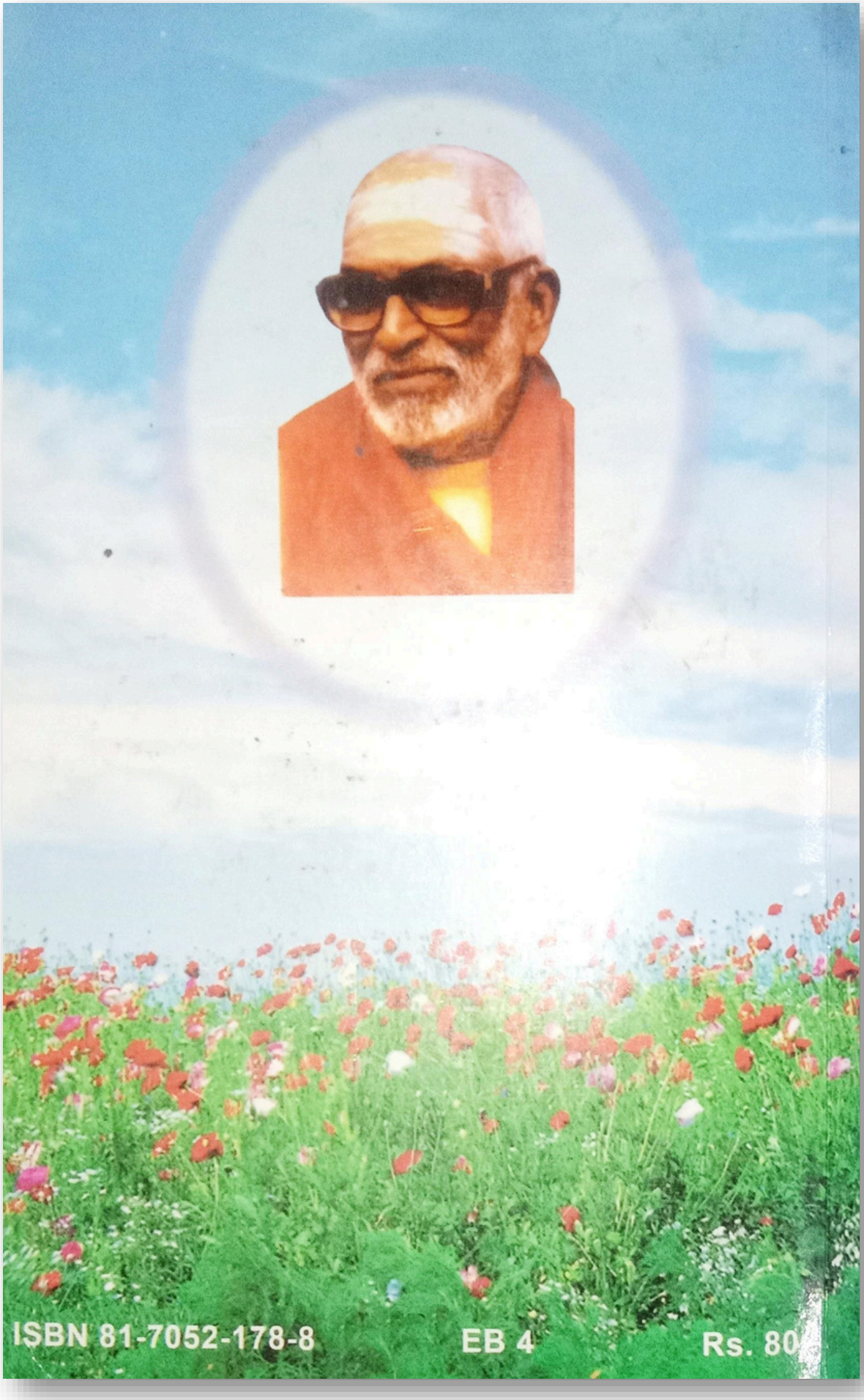
The scriptures are never tired of insisting on devotion to the spiritual preceptor. The Chhandogya Upanishad says: "A person who has a preceptor knows Brahman" (VI-14-ii). The Tripad-Vibhuti Maha-Narayana Upanishad states: Just as a born-blind man cannot have any knowledge about colour and form, even so, one cannot get the knowledge of Truth without the instruction of the preceptor even in a crore of Kalpas" (chapter V). The Advaya Taraka Upanishad closes its instructions on the Atman-Brahman with a glorious tribute to the spiritual preceptor.

Even pragmatic knowledge-mere collection of information about the perishable objects of the world, not about their real nature but about their name and form alone -one learns only through a teacher. What to speak of Brahman-Knowledge, the Knowledge of the Reality that is hidden under the names and forms! It can never be had without a preceptor. This has been the experience of those who have successfully treaded the spiritual path. Reason also supports this fact. For, Brahman-Knowledge being beyond the ken of the intellect, one has to depend upon one's own preceptor. The preceptor who is well-versed in the spiritual lore and himself established in the Truth,

through a mysterious power, imparts the Knowledge. The Atman alone reveals the Atman to the Atman. An illustrious from our daily experience is given by Acharya Suresvara, in his Naishkarmya Siddhi, to show how it is impossible to explain logically the part played by the Mahavakya 'Tat-tvam-asi' in the revelation of the Reality in the aspirants. A sleeping man is awakened by a mere sound. How the man is awakened cannot be logically explained. One cannot say that the man hears the sound and therefore wakes up, for in the state of deep sleep his organ of hearing, along with the other organs and the mind is absent having merged itself in its cause. Can one deny that the man does not hear the sound? No, for he could not have woken up without hearing the sound. Thus we cannot say that he does not hear. This simple fact seems to be a mystery when we try to explain it. The action of the Mahavakya imparted to the disciple by the preceptor, is something similar, says the Acharya, impossible of rational explanation, for it is the realm of the Great Beyond, which is beyond the range of the limited human intellect.

Having given this piece of precept to readers, the spiritual aspirants treading the path, regarding the role of the preceptor in the scheme of Self-realisation and the basic necessity of an attitude of self-surrender to the preceptor, Totakacharya offers his obeisance to his preceptor, the great Acharya Sankara of world renown, the greatest expounder of the philosophy which goes by the name of Advaita, in beautiful, poetic language, the revealing the disciple's absolute self-surrender to preceptor, the bestower of Immortality. 'O Lord', says the author, 'I have been swaying like a pendulum in the swing of never-ceasing cycle of births and deaths caused by the beginningless nescience. My head has been reeling due to the sufferings in my innumerable births in all kinds of wombs, high and low. Like children clinging to the swing out of fear of falling,

I also have been holding fast to this life of transmigration, mistaking the unreal for the Real, the insentient for Sentience and pain for Bliss. O my saviour, you, the foremost among the wise on the face of this earth, grant Liberation from the thraldom of this phenomenal existence, to your disciples who possess the fourfold qualifications and who surrender themselves to you, by imparting the supreme Knowledge of Atman-Brahman. You have, once for all, destroyed the nescience in my mind, through your instructions, like the effulgent sun doing away with the darkness of night through its rays of light. I offer my prostrations again and again at your holy feet, through my body, organs and mind. O my Lord, you, the greatest of the Paramhamsas are my Saviour. I shall continue to remain at your feet, serving you throughout my life.



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